# The Arrow and the Spindle

*Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in*

# TIBET

Samten G. Karmay



MANDALA BOOK POINT

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# Preface

This volume contains articles that were written over a period covering the space of 2 decades. They deal with diverse subjects, but are related to one another insofar as they focus on Tibetan culture.

The first part of the volume is devoted to historical documents. Articles Nos.1 and 2,[1] examine materials that have never been published before partly because they lay undercover in a large work in two volumes so that their existence could not easily be spotted unless one was working through the volumes. They shed light on the social and religious problems caused by certain types of Buddhist practices that were current during the period from the mid-ninth to the mid-eleventh centuries in Tibet. In addition to these, while one official document (No.3) highlights political and religious activities of a kingdom far from Central Tibet, another official rock-carved inscription (No.4) brings a new dimension to the historical study of the Tibetan empire.

The second part consists of studies in Dzogchen philosophy, drawing mainly on its oldest text found among the Dunhuang manuscripts (No.7). Does this have an Indic origin as the Nyingmapa school claims? This leads on to observations (No.5) on the polemics that raged through the centuries concerning the origin of Dzogchen philosophy. It is followed by a study using early documents concerning the origin myths of tantric doctrines. From an early period tantric teachings in Tibet became a subject of controversy. Doubts were expressed concerning whether tantric doctrines should be considered as genuine Buddhist teachings. The object of this study is therefore to display the kind of historical and doctrinal problems that the Tibetan Buddhists endeavoured in various ways to solve.

The third part brings up the topic of the Bon religion. Article No.8 corresponds to lectures that were given in the Toyo Bunko, Tokyo. They are mainly concerned with general historical and religious problems of the Bon tradition and its relation to Tibetan Buddhism. The Bon tradition presents itself as a pre-Buddhist religion in Tibet and is also regarded as such by the Tibetan Buddhist historians. Different views on this are, however, held by some Western scholars. According to some it did not even exist as a religion before the eleventh century and according to others the term *bon* merely signified rituals or denoted a group of practitioners before the tenth century. If these views are to be accepted, how are we going to interpret such early documents as the one that we propose to study (No.9)?. Related to this topic was the burning question of whether the life-stories of the Bon master retold

[1] All the numbers refer to the articles in the volume.

in lengthy writings were forged on the model of the Nyingmapa literature. In order to explore the kind of inspiration and materials that were used in writing such life-stories, article No.10 makes analytic comparisons between the native writings and an ancient Chinese story of Central Asian origin. The Bon tradition presents a rich indigenous culture. The sacred dances that it preserves are of particular interest. Article No.11 draws attention to this aspect of the tradition. We also encounter literature on the organisation of domestic space (No.12). One of the strongholds of the Bon tradition was Gyalrong, where wood-blocks for the impression of a large part of the Bonpo Canon were made. Article No.13 looks into the working organisation of the wood-blocks. The historical tradition of Bon is closely connected with the region of Kongpo where its chief sacred mountain is to be found. Article No.14 illustrates the subject of the mountain and its surroundings with ethnographic data as well as with literary sources. This part of the book then closes with an analysis of a polemical text (No.15) concerning the origin of the celebrated four-fold medical treatises and the ensuing controversy between the Medical schools themselves as well as between the Bonpo and Buddhist traditions.

The third part of the volume takes up the subject of the relation between myths and rituals, and the religious beliefs that myths and rituals engender. Popular rituals and the beliefs they communicate in Tibet are mostly related to the origin myth of the first Tibetan king, the mythical founder of the Tibetan nation. Article No.16 takes a close look at the presentation of the origin myth of the Yarlung dynasty. This is followed by a study of the myths concerning procreation and creation of the Tibetan people as a particular race (No.17) based on an unknown manuscript. Rituals are often studied as an entity on their own by philologists. They are often thought of as being devoid of any religious concepts, or detached from their social context. But this gives the researcher little chance of grasping the innerworkings of the rituals. It is therefore essential to carry out fieldwork for an understanding of the depth of the ritual significance. This leads to another article, No.18, that analyses various versions of the origin myth of the first Tibetan king using a hitherto unknown early source. That text enables us to reconstruct in its complete form a myth that is otherwise found only in its different parts scattered in various documents. With this in mind, article No.19 considers the notion of 'soul' and its function in various rituals, taking into account the social context of a given society. The notion of ritual ransom is an undercurrent in many of the Buddhist and Bon popular rituals, but it presented itself at its clearest in an annual state ceremony in Lhasa in the pre-communist era of Tibet. Article No.20 focuses on this state ceremony of the old Tibetan government in which human ransoms play a predominant part, as well as bringing into the light the origin of the ceremony itself. The popular ritual of the burning of juniper leaves and other



aromatic shrubs as offerings in various social contexts is a visible feature of Tibetan culture. The study (No.21) of this ritual reveals that it was in fact a purificatory ritual in its origin, and also discusses the stages through which it evolved from its indigenous concept to its transformation into a lamaistic ritual.

This study is followed by an investigation (No.22) of the ritual of the well-being of man. It is in fact a part of the previous ritual (No.21), but its mythological function and symbolism have been misunderstood. Closely linked with this ritual is the mountain cult (No.23) which plays an essential role in the construction of ethnic identity, but has never been given prominence before in writings on Tibetan culture, partly because it is mainly the affair of laymen. In other words, it did not form part of the Buddhist culture and therefore remained unnoticed. The central notion of this ritual is the deity of the local territory, a notion that has an important bearing on political organisation in Tibetan societies. In order to assess the social and political dimensions of the ritual, my study (No.24) combines an anthropological and philological approach and draws on a certain number of oppositions: practices in the past and those of the present day, kings and local chiefs, central state and local government, lay tradition and monastic establishment, regional and local, oral and written traditions, national myths and local folk-lore, imported foreign gods and local native spirits. By contrast with the notion of the deity of local territory, the sanctification of a mountain as a holy place for spiritual exercises involves a totally different procedure. Few have so far realised the difference between the two notions. Article No.25 elucidates the process in which a mountain is designated as a holy place.

The fifth part of this collection deals with the Gesar epic. Article No.26 is concerned with an outline of the epic literature together with an assessment of its influence on the present day Tibetan people under the conditions of foreign occupation. The Tibetan epic literature was intensively studied by European scholars mostly focusing on the kinds of material that make up the epic. However, their work lacks a basic structural presentation. The present article No. 27 endeavours to fill in this gap. Furthermore, research on the epic has so far been carried out on the basis of a purely philological orientation. The idealised society and social life depicted in the epic have not been compared with real life in the field. This needed to be examined through an anthropological lens. To perform this task, my research (No.28) tries to discover the basic pattern in the social organisation of the Tibetan epic.

The sixth part mainly looks at the political decline of Tibet. Article No.29 considers first the regaining of Tibetan unity in the seventeenth century with the accession of the Fifth Dalai Lama as the sovereign of Tibet. This is followed by an account of his state visit to the Manchu emperor in

Beijing (No.30). Government by ecclesiastics and aristocracy had never been beneficial to the Tibetan people. It constituted the real obstacle to the modernisation of Tibet and was of course the main cause of the backwardness that undoubtedly paved the way for foreign occupation of the country. Religious sectarianism and regional faction is still a prominent feature of the Tibetans in exile. Article No.31 contemplates this problem. The volume closes with an historical outline of Amdo, the traditional province of north-eastern Tibet (No.32). The province is presently engulfed by Chinese settlers and is divided up among the Chinese provinces. Consequently it now exists only as a name.



# Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my colleague, Dr. Charles Ramble. It was through him that I have been in contact with the publisher. Although he has been intensively occupied with his own research and travels, he managed to spare considerable time to check through all the articles and indeed never failed to give me valuable advice.

I am also very grateful to Véronique Martin for translating the articles in French into English. She carried out this task with painstaking care.

Thanks are also due to Mr Madhab L. Maharjan, the publisher, who has been so patient to wait for the interminable preparation of this book for publication.

# Abbreviations

The following is a list of abbreviations of titles of both Buddhist and Bonpo written sources

*ABS* Anonymous Buddhist Sources
*ABT* Anonymous Bonpo Texts
*BA* *The Blue Annals* (see Roerich, G.N.).
*BG* *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo.* Peking 1985.
*BK* *Blon po bka' thang* by O-rgyan gling-pa.
*BMS* *Bla ma sa skya chen po'i rnam thar* by Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan.
*BS* *Sources for a history of bon , see ABT.*
No.14 *gZhod ston gyi rnam thar* by gZhod-ston bSod-grags.
No.16 *Bla ma yar 'brog pa'i rnam thar* by gShen-ston Nam-mkha' rgyal-mtshan.
*BTChB* *Bu ston chos 'byung* by Rin-chen-grub, Bu-ston -.
*BTh* *dBang thang bskyed pa'i thabs,* see*ABS.*
*BZh* *sBa bzhed* (Stein: 1961).
*Ch* *Chos dang chos ma yin pa rnam par dbye ba* by dPal-'dzin, 'Bri-gung -.
*ChD* *'Chi bdag dpung zlog* by 'Jigs-bral ye-shes rdo-rje, bDud-'joms-.
*ChJ* *Chos la 'jug pa'i sgo* by bSod-nams rtse-mo.
*ChR* *Chos 'byung rin po che'i gter mdzod* by rGyal-sras Thugs-mchog-rtsal.
*ChS* *'Chi bslu yongs rdzogs,* see *ABS.*
*DD* Dunhuang Documents
*DChB* *lDe'u chos 'byung* by lDe'u, mKhas pa -.
*DJChB* *lDe'u jo sras chos 'byung* by lDe'u Jo-sras.
*DK* *Dukula* by Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho.
*DKT* *'Dul ba kun las btus pa'i gzhung* by Shes-rab 'od-zer, Me-ston -.
*DM* *Deb ther dmar po by* Kun-dga' rdo-rje, Tshal-pa -
*DMS* *Dri med gsal sgron* by Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, 'A-zha -.
*DNg* *Deb ther sngon po* by gZhon-nu-dpal, 'Gos -.
*DR* *sDom gsum rab dbye* by Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan, Sa-paṇ -.
*DS* *Dar rgyas gsal sgron* by bsTan-rgyal bzang-po, sPa -.
*DSh* *Dri med shel phreng* by bsTan-'dzin phun-tshogs, De'u-dmar -.
*DTs* *bDud rts'i bsang gtor* by dKon-mchog rgyal-mtshan, dPal-mang-.
*DzG* *'Dzam gling gangs rgyal ti se'i dkar chag* by bsTan-'dzin rin-chen, Grub-dbang -.
*DzM* *mDzes mtshar mig rgyam* by 'Jam-dpal rdo-rdo-rje.
*GB* *bsGrags byang,* see *ABT.*
*GBB* *sGra sbyor bam po gnyis pa, T* Vol.144, No.5833.
*GBN* *dGos 'byung nor bu* by 'Jigs-med nam-mkha'i rdo-rje, Khyung-sprul -.
*GG* *sGra 'grel,* see *ABT.*
*GK* *rGyal po dkar po drug mdos. RT,* Vol. 69 (Pi), 307-345.



*GP* *rGyal po spyi mdos mthong ba don grol.* In *gTo 'bum dgod 'dod sna tshogs re skong.* Gangtok 1978, 518-550.
*GRB* *rGyal rabs bon gyi 'byung gnas* by Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, Khyung-po -.
*GS* *Gling bzhi srid pa spyi mdos kyi zin bris. RT,* Vol.69.
*GSD* *Ge khod gsang ba drag chen,* see *ABT.*
*GZh* *brGya bzhi'i cho ga 'dod don lhun grub,* see *ABS.*
*HD* *lHa 'dre bka' thang.* In *bKa' thang sde lnga* by O-rgyan gling-pa
*HG* *lHa rgod gnyan gyi byung rabs,* see *ABT*
*HR* *lHa btsan po'i rabs* by Tshe-dbang nor-bu, Ka-thog -.
IOL India Office Library, London: Dunhuang manuscripts.
IATS International Association for Tibetan Studies.
*JA* *Journal Asiatique* (Paris)
*K* *bKa' 'gyur, The Tibetan Tripitaka* (Japanese reproduction of the Peking edition, Tokyo, Suzuki Foundation, 1955-1961).
*KChK* *bKa' chems bka' khol ma,* see *ABS.*
*KhG* *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* by gTsug-lag phreng-ba, dPa-bo -.
*KK* *dKar chag skal bzang* by dBang-phyug rgyal-po, bShad-sgra - .
*KS* *mKha' klong gsang mdos,* see *ABT.*
*KSh* *bSang mchod bkra shis 'khyil ba* by Nagag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho.
*KTDG* *bKa' 'gyur brten 'gyur sde tshan sgrig tshul* by Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin, mKhan-chen -.
*KTS* *mDzod kun lbtus* by Tshul-khrims rgyal-mtshan, sGa-ston -.
*KZ* *bsKal bzang gzhon nu'i mgul rgyan,* see *ABS.*
*LhNg* *mNol bsang lha chab sngon mo,* see *ABS.*
*LK* *Rlung rta bskyed pa'i thabs,* see *ABS.*
*LRB* *Lung dang rigs pa'i 'brug sgra* by Blo-rgos rgyal-mtshan, Sog-zlog-pa -.
*LShDT* *Legs bshad bdud rtsi'i dga' ston* by Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, Sog-zlog-pa-.
*LShDz* *Legs bshad mdzod* by bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan, Shar-rdza -.
*MBT* *Minor Buddhist Texts* (Tucci, 1958).
*MDz* *Jo bo rje dpal ldan mar me mdzad ye shes kyi rnam thar,* see *ABS.*
*ND* *Nad bdag stobs 'joms kyi gto chog,* see *ABS.*
*NG* *sNang gsal sgron me* by Nyi-ma gras-pa, Zhu -.
*NgD* *Nges don 'brug sgra* by Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, Sog-zlog-pa -.
*NgL* *sNgon med legs bshad* by bZhed-pa'i rdo-rje, Sle-lung -.
*NgR* *Ngo mtshar rin po che'i 'phreng ba* by Byams-pa Tshul-khrims, Phur-lcog -.
*NSG* *rNam bshad gsal ba'i sgron me* by Rin-chen 'od-zer, sKyab-ston -.
*NyChB* *Nyang ral chos 'byung* by Nyi-ma 'od-zer, Nyang-ral -.
*NyG* *rNying ma rgyud 'bum,* Thimbu, 1975.
*NyZG* *Nyi zer sgron ma,* see *ABT.*
*NYM* *rNam thar yid kyi mun sel* by Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, Sog-zlog-pa -.

| | |
|---|---|
| *PhLMG* | *Phrin las myur 'grub*, see *ABS*. |
| *PhM* | *'Phrul gyi me long* by Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, 'A-zha -. |
| *PJ* | *dPag bsam ljon bzang* by Ye-shes dpal-'byor, Sum-pa -. |
| *PS* | *dPag bsam* by bsTan-'dzin blo-gros, Hor-btsun -. |
| *PT* | *Pelliot tibétain,* Dunhuang manscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris. |
| *RPS* | *Rlangs po ti bse ru rgyas pa*, see *ABS*. |
| *RT* | *Rin chen gter mdzod.* Thimphu. n.d. |
| *SCh* | *bSang mchod kyi byung khungs bstan pa* by 'Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse. |
| *SDz* | *Srid pa'i mdzod phug, see ABT.* |
| *SG* | *Srid rgyud* by Blo-gros thogs-med, Khod-po -. |
| *ShDz* | *bShad mdzod* by Don-dam smra-ba'i seng-ge. |
| *ShM* | *Shel dkar me long* by Blo-bzang chos-kyi nyi-ma, Thu'u-bkvan -. |
| *ShP* | *rNam thar shel phreng lu gu rgyud* by Ye-shes-dpal, Gu-ge Khri-thang-pa -. |
| *SK* | *Sa skya bka' 'bum.* Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko 1968. |
| *SM* | *gSal ba'i me long* by bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan, Sa-skya-pa -. |
| *SNg* | *bSang gi dag gtsang sngon 'gro* compiled by Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan, mNyam-med -. |
| *SP* | *bSod nams dpung bskyed,* see *ABS*. |
| SPS | Satapitaka Series. |
| *STh* | *gSer thur* by Shakya mchog-ldan, gSer-mdog Pan-chen -. |
| *T* | *bsTan 'gyur, The Tibetan Tripitaka* (Japanese reproduction of the Peking edition, Tokyo, Suzuki Foundation, 1955-1961). |
| *TB* | *bsTan pa bon gyi klad don* by Tshul-khrims rgyal-mtshan, sGa-ston -. |
| *TD* | *Pho brang stong thang ldan dkar dkar chag*, *T* Vol. 145, No. 5851. |
| *THDD* | *mThong ba don ldan* by Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho. |
| *TL* | *gTsug lag snang srid spyi skong gi mdos chog. RT,* Vol.69, 475-490. |
| *TR* | *gTam gyi rol mo* by Shakya mchog-ldan, gSer-mdog Pan-chen -. |
| *TS* | *bsTan srung mtshan tho* by Ngag-dbang blo-bzang, Klong-rdol -. |
| *TTGL* | *gTer ston brgya rtsa'i rnam thar* by Yon-tan rgya-mtsho, Kong-sprul -. |
| *VD* | *Vairo 'dra 'bag*, see *ABS*. |
| *VK* | *Vaidurya dkar po* by Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho, sDe-srid -. |
| *VNg* | *Vaidurya sngon po* by Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho, sDe-srid -. |
| *VS* | *Vaidurya ser po* by Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho, sDe-srid -. |
| *YJChB* | *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung* by Shakya rin-chen, Yar-lung Jo-bo-. |
| *YK* | *Yid bzhin bkod pa'i rgyan* by Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, 'A-zha -. |
| *YM* | *Yid kyi me long* by Tshe-dbang nor-bu, Ka-thog -. |
| *YN* | *Yid bzhin nor bu* by Rin-chen-grub, Bu-ston -. |
| *ZJ* | *gZi brjid* by Blo-ldan snying-po, sPrul-sku -. |
| *ZM* | *gZer mig* by gSer-mig, Drang-rje btsun-pa -. |



# PART I

# Edicts

# The Ordinance of *lHa Bla-ma* Ye-Shes-'od

Before we can discuss the ordinance (*bka' shog*) of the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od, the king of Pu-hrangs, it may be useful to say a few words about the king himself. He is perhaps one of the best known figures among the descendants of the Tibetan royal dynasty in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries A.D., having initiated the revival of the Buddhist monastic tradition in Western Tibet. Consequently no *chos 'byung* could proceed without devoting a few lines to him. Yet nothing much is really known about him apart from the story that he became dissatisfied with the nature of Buddhist practice in his time, and that he sent Lo-chen Rin-chen bzang-po (958-1055) to Kashmir to find out whether the tantric teachings were authentic or not. In addition to these, he is said to have renounced the worldly life and to have become a Buddhist monk, hence the name Ye-shes-'od (Jñānaprabha).[1] In later life he is said to have sacrificed his life in a prison of the Gar-log[2] by continuing his detention voluntarily until death. This ultimately enabled his grand-nephew Byang-chub-'od to invite Atīśa who arrived in Tibet in 1042 A.D.[3] Heroic action it might have been, and the Tibetan Buddhist historians seem to have felt that it was enough just to mention this story and repeat it through the ages. However this legendary account is in conflict with an almost contemporary source, the short biography of Rin-chen bzang-po, composed by a disciple of his namely Jñānaśri of Khri-thang in Gu-ge. According to this biography Ye-shes-'od died in Tho-ling (mTho-lding) after an illness. It makes no mention of this king dying in a prison.[4]

Ye-shes-'od was one of two brothers and all the sources agree that it was the elder of the two who became a monk, but it is hard to know whether this elder brother was Srong-nge or 'Khor-re. These names sound very strange in Tibetan until we know precisely what they stand for. Yet

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1 *bod kyi lha btsan po slob dpon byang chub sems dpa' lha bla ma Jñānaprabha*, *T* Vol.142, No.5799, p.67-1-4.

2. Qarlug, a Turkic people and country situated to the north of mNga'-ris. They were in contact with the Tibetans already towards the end of the eighth century A.D.: *gar log gi pho nyas phyag btsal* – 'the messengers of the Gar-log paid homage' (*GBB*, p. 71-2-3). When the persecution of Buddhist monastic establishments took place in Central Tibet, three Tibetan monks are said to have left and went to mNga'-ris and then left Tibet altogether passing through Gar-log and finally arrived in Amdo. *BTChB*, p. 895; On Gar-log, see also Barthold, 1945: 41-44, 60-62.

3. *MDz*, pp.105-9.

4. *ShP*, p.95.

no Tibetan Buddhist historian seems to have bothered to explain them right down until the eighteenth century historian Ka-thog Tshe-dbang nor-bu (1698-1755). He discovered a fragment of an old manuscript from an acient Kanika *stūpa* in Gung-thang, a district of mNga'-ris. According to him this manuscript which he does not identify explains that Srong-nge stood for Drang-srong-lde and 'Khor-re for 'Khor-lo-lde.[5] He assumes without further question, probably in accordance with the manuscript account, that Srong-nge the elder brother was the one who became the *lha bla ma* Ye-she-'od and not 'Khor-re as many *chos 'byung* maintain.[6]

In one of the Dunhuang manuscripts, *PT* 8497, there is a list of names of the Tibetan kings which takes more or less a genealogical form. It mentions *btsan po ācārya* just after the name bKra-shis-mgon.[7] Now every source agrees that this bKra-shis-mgon was the father of the two brothers and I presume that *btsan po ācārya* is none other than Ye-shes-'od.[8] Indeed he was known by the title *bod kyi lha btsan po slob dpon*.[9] Another historical record that bears the name of this king is the inscription discovered by H. A. Francke in the vicinity of the village of Poo near the Tabo monastery. According to him the inscription contains the following line: *lha bla ma ye shes* ..., but the end of this line was effaced.[10] Other historical traces of his activities are the founding of the tempel of Tho-ling[11] and the translation of an Indian medical work under his patronage.[12] Some Kashmiri Buddhists are said to have been invited to mNga'-ris by him.

Tibetan Buddhists generally considered this king to have been a Bodhisattva like some of the early kings. In a eulogy to him composed by his grand-nephew, Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od, his name is styled as the *bla ma byang chub sems dpa'* Ye-shes-'od.[13] Soon after the eleventh century, bSod-nams rtse-mo (1142-1182),[14] the Sa-skya-pa writer claims that the advent of this king was even prophesied by the Buddha in the *Mahākarunā-sūtra*[15] and *Mañjuśrīmūlatantra*.[16]

5. *HR*, p.348.
6. *BTChB*, p.905; Khor-re; *DNg*, Ka f.19b 2: 'Khor-re, but Kha f.10b, 2: Srong-nge; *MDz*, p.102: Khor-re, but *ChJ*, p. 344-1: Khri-dpal srong-nge.
7. Hackin, 1924: 17.
8. Another *btsan po a tsa ra* is mentioned in the line of Yum-brtan, but this is chonologically too late to be identical, see *MDz*, p.100.
9. See n.1.
10. Francke, 1914, Pt.1: 19; Tucci, 1935: 112.
11. *ShP*, p.89.
12. *T* Vols.141-142, No.5799.
13. *T* Vol.73, No.3335, p.213-4-6.
14. *ChJ*, p.344.
15. *K* Vol.29, No.780.
16. *K* Vol.6, No.162.



The *bka' shog* which I translate as 'ordinance' is in the form of an open letter. Among a collection of several small works of the rNying-ma-pa polemic writer, Sog-zlog-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1552-1624) which is devoted to what is known as *dgag lan* i.e. a reply to *dgag yig* 'refutation', there are two short works of the *dgag lan* type written in order to refute the *bka' shog*. In the first of the two works Sog-zlog-pa cites the *bka' shog* passage by passage and deals with each point giving his own replies.[17] It is from this *dgag lan* that I have extracted the passages of the *bka' shog* and put them together. This seems to be the only text extant apart from a short paragraph quoted in *PJ*.[18] The *dgag lan* , which contains the full text of the *bka' shog*, is in fact more of a confirmation of what the *bka' shog* states rather than a refutation. However, in the second *dgag lan*[19] Sog-zlog-pa adopts a partisan point of view. He defends the rNying-ma-pa tradition, at the same time asserting by implication that the *bka' shog* does not take up any particular point that could be considered as a criticism of the rNying-ma-pa tradition.[20] This assertion on the part of Sog-zlog-pa can hardly be accepted since at the time when the *bka' shog* was written, there was no question of a rNying-ma-pa tradition as such, for the *sngags gsar ma* (the New Tantras) had hardly begun. The *bka' shog* to all intents and purposes is a criticism of the general tantric practices prevailing at that time. Nevertheless, reading between the lines it is the tantras such as the *gSang ba snying po* which are the object of criticism. We shall come to this tantra later. It is probably because of this implication that Sog-zlog-pa refutes it from the rNying-ma-pa standpoint in his second *dgag lan*. As he takes a partisan position, his replies do not contribute much to the understanding of the *bka' shog* itself. What is appreciated is that he has faithfully given the complete text of the *bka' shog*.

The *bka' shog* is signed only with the title: the *lha bla ma* of Pu-hrangs. Sog-zlog-pa correctly takes it to be that of Ye-shes-'od.[21] The *bka' shog* is probably identical to the *sNgags log sun 'byin* (criticism of the wrong tantras) which, according to Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub, Ye-shes-'od wrote.[22] 'Bri-gung dPal-'dzin,[23] the polemic figure, also ascribes it to Ye-shes-'od. However, there is another tradition which ascribes it to Byang-chub-'od but we cannot substantiate this tradition with any evidence.[24]

17. *NgD*, pp.435-44.
18. *PJ*, f.248b.
19. *NgD*, pp.444-62.
20. *NgD*, pp.436, 459.
21. *NgD*, pp.436, 444.
22. *BTChB*, p.1049.
23. *Ch*, quoted in *NgD*, pp.388-89.
24. *PS*, f.248b; Tucci, Heissig, 1973: 40.

The *bka' shog* was issued in connection with certain tantric practices which were prevailing in the tenth and early eleventh centuries A.D. According to the eulogy of Zhi-ba-'od, Ye-shes-'od became very doubtful about the religious practices, particularly those of the so-called *sbyor, sgrol* and *tshogs*.[25] He states:

> Furthermore, the hidden meaning of the secret *mantra* was vitiated, and it was further corrupted by the practices of the rites of 'sexual union', 'deliverance' and the '*tshogs* offering'.
>
> To find out whether these practices were correct at all, The *lo-tsā-ba* Rin-chen bzang-po was sent to Kashmir.[26]

Already towards the end of the eighth century A.D. there was the question of whether the tantras, especially the Anuttarayoga tantras, were to be practised literally. Finally, it was decided that such tantras should be translated into Tibetan only when royal permission was given.[27] However, after the collapse of the royal authority there was a flourishing of tatric practices. The later sources[28] give various names of personages, groups or individuals, for example the eighteen Ar-tsho bandhe, Sham-thabs sngon-po-can and the *acārya* dMar-po.[29] We do not encounter these

25. See n. 34.
26. *gzhan yang gsang sngags sbas don nub gyur cing/*
*sbyor sgrol dang ni tshogs la sogs pas slad/*
*'di rnams don nges brtsal (btsal) phyir bkas gnyer ste/*
*lo tsa rin chen bzang po kha cher brdzangs/* (*T* Vol.73, No.3335, p.212-5-1).
Rin-chen bzang-po was already seventy in 1027. I assume that the *bka' shog* was issued long before this date and prior to 985 A.D. According to *ShP* Rin-chen bzang-po became a monk at the age of 13 (i.e. 970 A.D.), p.62; left for Kashmir at 18 (975), p.67, and spent ten years there till he was 27 (985), p.86, before he returned to his native country (unfortunatley at this point *ShP* stops altogether giving any more chonological indications). He then became the *mchod gnas* of King lHa-lde in Pu-hrangs (p.88), and assisted him in founding the temple of Kha-char in Pu-hrangs. At the same time he also assisted Ye-shes-'od in founding Tho-ling in Gu-ge (p. 89). When the temples were completed Ye-shes-'od asked him to go to Kashmir again in order to fetch the books which were left there when he came home before and to bring some Kashmiri artists. It is at this time that Ye-shes-'od sent 15 boys with him to study Sanskrit in his charge (pp. 90-91). It took six years before he returned again (p. 94). Not long after this Ye-shes-'od died (p. 95). Therefore it seems that he died towards the end of the tenth century, A.D.
27. *GB*, p.73-4-6; Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub, *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam par bzhag pa rin po che'i mdzes rgyan*, SPS, Vol.55 (*The Collected Works of Bu-ston*, Pt.15 Ba), p.127; also *gSang 'dus rgyud 'grel bshad thabs*, SPS, Vol.49 (pt. 9, Ta), p. 76.
28. Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho, *Bod kyi deb ther dpyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs*, Varanasi, 1967, p.107: *a ra mo; PJ*, f.29a; *NgD*, p.463.
29. He is identified as a gSang-ba shes-rab or Shes-rab gsang-ba and is said to have come from Oḍḍiyāna. He preached what one termed as *chags lam thig le'i skor* causing many monks to break their monastic rules. According to 'Gos gZhon-nu-dpal



names in the early sources, but those who followed tantric practices during this period were what the *bka' shog* calls 'Ba'-'ji-ba.[30] They are described in *BZh*, in the following words:

> "the keys of some of the temples were kept by the tantrists who shaved their heads and who for doing coarse practice wore clothes with sleeves attached upside down".[31]

In the same source this description is preceded by another one concerning one sort of monk, who on the contrary did not shave their heads but wore their *sham thabs* with 'collars' and who called themselves dGra-bcom-pa (Arhats). However, these were not called 'Ba'-'ji-ba.

The fact that the tantric practices got out of control during this period is supported also by an almost contemporary account found in a Dunhuang manuscript which I have published elsewhere.[32] All *chos 'byung* speak of wrong tantric practices during this period, but none gives any precise account as to which or what kind of tantras were involved. Among the tantras that we can cite as an example and which evidently had been followed is the *gSang ba snying po* (*Guhyagarbha*),[33] the principal work of the Mahāyoga tantras preserved by the rNying-ma-pa tradition. Chapter 11 of this tantra is exclusively devoted to the exegesis of the practices of *sbyor, sgrol* and *tshogs*.[34] The authenticity of this tantra was questioned and consequently it had been the most controversial tantric work in Tibet. The controversy came to an end only when a Sanskrit original is said to have been found in bSam-yas in the thirteenth century.[35]

he visited Tibet twice, once before Atīśa came to Tibet and in a later period when he became a teacher of the *sa chen* (i.e. Kun-dga' snying-po,1092-1158), *DNg* (Roerich, 1949: 1050). This master is an object of criticism, but is also defended by the Fifth Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p.108.
30. Another edition of *NgD* has *'ban 'ji*, but *BZh*, p. 86, 1.9: *'ban 'dzi.* For further information on this term see at the end of this article.
31. *BZh*, p.86.
32. Article No.5.
33 *K* Vol.10, No.455.
34. Chapter 11 is entitled *Tshogs kyi dkyil 'khor*. The practices of *sbyor* and *sgrol* in fact form a part of the ritual known as *tshogs kyi mchod pa*. The practice *sbyor ba* is conceived as being *mchod pa*. Part I, VIII and IX of the Dunhuang manuscript *PT* 42 are devoted to these practices (Macdonald, Imaeda, 1978: Tome I, P.48-52; Pl.59-61). Particularly part VIII of the manuscript is a résumé of the section on this subject in the commentary of *gSang ba snying po* by Sūryasiṃhaprabha: *dPal gsang ba snying po'i rgya cher 'grel ba*, Delhi,1976, ff.308-17.
35. The Sanskrit original is said to have been found by bCom-ldan rig-ral, the great bKa'-gdams-pa master. Certain parts of it were eventually translated by Thar-lo Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan (fourteenth century), see the *par byang* of the edition of Zhol spar khang shar dga' ldan phun tshogs gling, Lhasa, f. 28b. However, according to

Such is the background of the *bka' shog* which was issued in order to fight these religious practices. After Ye-shes-'od's death the campaign was carried on by his grand-nephews, Byang-chub-'od and Zhi-ba-'od. In connection with the campaign, Byang-chub-'od asked Atīśa seven questions[36] concerning Buddhism as it was then practised in Tibet. One of these was the quetion whether Buddhist monks were allowed to practise certan tantric teachings. Covering these seven questions Atīśa composed his famous short work, *Byang chub lam sgron*[37] explicitly mentioning the unsuitability for monks to take the last two of the four types of *abhiṣeka*. Because of the malpractice and misunderstanding the Tibetans are said to have become so worried that they did not even allow Atīśa to preach tantric teachings.[38]

The *bka' shog* can be divided into three parts. The first part gives a general summary of Buddhism as the king understood it; the second part contains criticism of the tantric practices and the consequences of those practices, and the third part is a kind of prohibition of the practices but couched in warm-hearted words of advice rather than in threats. It is the second part which throws light on the nature of religious practices in the tenth century. Apart from the practices of *sbyor* and *sgrol* the *bka' shog* also brings out the question of the practices of *sman sgrub*, *bam sgrub* and *mchod sgrub*. It mentions no particular work nor gives any date. It is quite different in characters and in form from that of Zhi-ba-'od, whose *bka' shog* not only indicates the date it was issued but also gives a long list of religious works of which he does not approve.[39] Nevertheless, the *bka' shog* itself states that it was issued by the *lha bla ma*, king of Pu-hrangs. Assuming that this king was really the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od, it may not be too hazardous to suggest an approximate date. When Rin-chen bzang-po returned from Kashmir around 985 A.D. according to the biography,[40] lHa-lde, the nephew of Ye-shes-'od was on the throne in Pu-hrangs and Ye-shes-'od himself was in Gu-ge. Therefore he was no longer the king of Pu-hrangs when Rin-chen bzang-po returned. Since the

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Sog-zlog-pa, the tantra was re-transated by bCom-ldan rig-ral himself (*NgD*, p.215). *Cf.* also *DNg* (Roerich, 1949: 102-4).

36. dBal-mang dKon-mchog rgyal-mtshan (1764-1853), *Byang chub lam gyi sgron me'i 'grel ba phul byung dgyes pa'i mchod sprin*, Gedan sunrab minyam gyunphe Series, Vol.63 (*Collected Works*, Vol. 4, No. 1), Delhi, 1974, pp.51-2.
37. *T* Vol.103, No.5343, p.21-5-1.
38. *Chos kyi rje dpal ldan sgam po pa chen po'i rnam par thar pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu rin po che kun khyab snyan pa'i ba dan* by bSod-nams lhun-grub zla-'od rgyal-mtshan, *Collected Works of sGam-po-pa bSod-nams rin-chen*, Delhi, 1975, Vol.I, No. 3. (Ga,), p.73.
39. See Article No. 2.
40 See n.26.



*bka' shog* is signed by the *lha bla ma*, king of Pu-hrangs, it is almost certain that it was issued within the few years preceding 985 A.D.

**English translation of the Tibetan text**

This ordinance was sent to the tantrists in Central Tibet by the *lha bla ma*, king of Pu-hrangs.[41] I request you to be solemn and to straighten up your views.

(I) In our southern continent, *jambudvīpa* of the Universe,
The Teacher Śākyamuni took birth.
As an antidote to the 44,000 passions,
He preached 44,000 *dharma* expanding from the Threefold Scriptures
As for the causes and their antidotes:
There are the ten evils and five terrible actions.
To avert these he preached the *dharma* of Cause and Effect:
Entering the door of the four Truths and (observing) the 250 rules,
Purification of the eighty-two passions through the path of vision and the path of meditation,
Adityabandhu, the Teacher, taught these as the Way of Śrāvaka.
Realization of the external and internal elements in the state of the twelve interdependences,
Attainment of the *bodhi* step by step for oneself,
Possession of various supernatural powers,
The protector...taught these as the Way of the Pratyekabuddha.
Labouring for the welfare of living beings through the Two Truths,
Realization of the external and internal elements in the nature of voidness,
Achieving the ten perfections by degrees,
The Teacher taught these as the highest way.

(II) You tantrists, who live in villages,
Have no connection with these Three Ways,
And yet claim "we follow the Mahāyāna".
Without observing the rules of the Mahāyāna,
You say "we are Mahāyānist".
This is like a beggar saying that he is king.
To claim to be Mahāyānist, though one is not,
Is like a donkey dressed in the skin of a lion.
The would-be successor of the Conqueror, who has reached the tenth stage of his *boddhisattva* career,

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41. There is a certain confusion about which king ruled over which territory in mNga'-ris. Tshe-dbang nor-bu (*HR*, p.347) states that Zhang-zhung ruled by bKra-shis-mgon included both Gu-ge and Pu-hrangs. This seems to be quite probable.

The *arya* Maitreya is free from the dichotomous perception of the object and cognition, and achieved the two great accumulations of merit,
But even he is still not free from the 'obscurity of that which may be known'.
Are the living beings in this impure age more noble than him?
Imprisoned in the dirt of the five kinds of sensual objects and women,
It is astonishing to say that "we are Dharmakāya".
Indulging in the ten evil ones and taking on the mode of life of dogs and pigs
You, who practise the religion of the non-Buddhists, the 'Ba' 'ji ba.
And yet say "we are Buddhists",
Must have either been deceived by a demon or be simply mad.
Formerly Buddhism was introduced into Tibet.
It saved (living beings) from taking evil rebirths and led them to salvation.
Its threefold precious teachings flourished far and wide.
The early kings who were Bodhisattvas,
Prohibited the false religion in accordance with the Word of the Buddha,[42]
Straightened up the views of people and opened the doors of the noble rebirths for them.
Numerous living beings entered the highest path of Buddhism.
Now as the good *karma* of living beings is exhausted and the law of the kings is impaired.
False doctrine called rDzogs chen is flourishing in Tibet.[43]
The views of this doctrine are mistaken.
Heretical tantras, pretending to be Buddhist, are also spread in Tibet.
These have brought harm to the kingdom in the following ways:
As 'deliverance' has become popular the goats and sheep are afflicted.[44]

42. This probaby refers to the prohibition of practising the Anuttarayoga tantras in the eighth century A.D.: see n.27; *NgD*, p.440.
43. *Cf.* Article No. 5.
44. Sog-zlog-pa retorts (*NgD*, p.447) that tantric texts propound no such doctrine. However, this in itself is evidence that the Tibetan Buddhists at this period indulged in having animals killed for them or in actual killing on the excuse of tantric practice, *cf.* notes 34 and 49. Sog-zlog-pa extends his reply by giving a long list of what is known as the 'domain of deliverance' (*sgral ba'i zhing*) comprising various people who oppose Buddhism (*NgD*, p.447).



As 'sexual rite' has become popular the different classes of people are mixed.[45]
As the ritual of medicine has become popular the materials for treating diseases are used up.[46]
As the ritual of the corpse[47] has become popular the making of offerings in cemeteries is abandoned.[48]
As the ritual of sacrifice has become popular it happens that people get 'delivered' alive.[49]

45. Sog-zlog-pa challenges saying that the ordinary 'coital act' cannot be equated with the meaning of the *sbyor* rite: *rigs rgyud 'jog pa'i 'dod chags la sbyor ba zhes gsang sngags pa'i lugs ma yin* (*NgD*, p.450). Again on the excuse of the tantric teaching Tibetan Buddhist monks probably indulged in such practices, hence the word *ser khyim* (married monk).
46. Sog-zlog-pa states that he heard no such account of this rite causing the scarcity of medicine. It is, he continues, not only the rNying-ma-pa but also the Bonpo who practise this ritual. In the Bonpo tradition this ritual, known as *sgrub chen*, is performed by each abbot on his accession as the abbot of the monastery, see Kvaerne, 1971: 247, n.36. For an account of the *sman sgrub* ritual of the rNying-ma-pa performed in 1748, see Ka-thog Tshe-dbang nor-bu, *Chos rje rin po che dznya nas zhus pa'i sman sgrub kyi dris lan, Collected Works...*, Vol.IV, No.2bis.
47. Sog-zlog-pa replies to this accusation in the following words (*NgD*, p. 450): *sngags gsar ma las kyang ro langs mkha' spyod sgrub pa la sogs pa gsungs la/ 'di ni mtshan nyid tshang ba'i bam de dngos grub kyi rdzas su sgrub pa yin la/ ro thams cad kyis bam sgrub tu rung ba ma bshad pa skyon de yang mi 'bab bo/* – 'Even in the New Tantras it is said that there are *sādhana* such as the *Ro langs mkha' spyod sgrub pa*. What is concerned here is that a corpse having the required qualities can be used as the substance for obtaining *siddhi*. As it is not said that any corpse would be suitable for practising the *bam* rite, your charge therefore does not apply to us'.
However, in another place (*NgD*, p.437) Sog-zlog-pa states that among the New Tantras there is also the *Bam sgrub ro langs gser sgrub*. Presumably this work and the *Ro langs mkha' spyod sgrub pa* are identical, but I have not found these texts at present. *Bam sgrub* therefore has the same sense as *ro sgrub* of which there is a story of a corpse having turned into gold, see *BZh*, p.33. For another example of a passage in which the term *bam sgrub* is used in the same context, see Macdonald, 1967: 19.
48. *dur sa'i mchod pa* or *dur mchod* refers to the custom of making offerings to the spirits of the dead of one's family. *Dur mchod* is probably the same as *tshe*, a word of Chinese origin (*BZh*, p.3, l.15).
49. Sog-zlog-pa here admits with reserve this charge (*NgD*, p.450): *spyir gsar rnying gi rgyud rnams su gsung pa'i sgrol ba zhes bya ba 'di gson po kho na sgrol ba yin gyis/ gshin po la sgrol rgyu med kyang/ lha bla ma'i skabs der sngags la rnyad btags pa'i spyod tshul ngan pa de byung ba yin mchi/* – "In general, the *sgrol ba* attested in the Old and New Tantras applies only to the 'deliverance' of those who are alive. There is no question of applying it to the dead. However, in the time of the *lha bla ma* there happened this bad practice on the excuse of tantric teachings".
Sog-zlog-pa does not explain the *mchod sgrub* specifically, but it is implied here referring to a Buddhist tantric practice which evidently involved killing people. Dunhuang manuscript *PT* 840 is a work related to this practice. It describes in minute detail how to carry out this rite. Sog-zlog-pa gives a further explanation which elucidates the difference in method between the practices of the *sgrol ba* and *mchod*

As the demons, who eat flesh, are worshipped there is plague among men and animals.
As the smoke of burnt (human) corpses is sent up into space, the local deities and the *klu* spirits have abandoned us.
Are these the practices of the Mahāyāna?
O village specialists, your tantric kind of practice,
If heard of in other countries would be a cause for shame.
You say "we are Buddhists", but your practices,
Show less compassion than an ogre.
You are more greedy for meat than a hawk or a wolf.
You are more lusty than a donkey or an ox.
You are more intent on sour-drinks than the *sbur gog* insects in a rotten house.
You make less distinction between pure and impure than a dog or a pig.
By offering faeces and urine,
semen and menses to pure divinities,
alas! you will be reborn in a mire of rotting corpses.
By denying the religion of the Threefold Scriptures,
Alas! You will be reborn in hell.
By way of retribution for killing animals through your 'rite of deliverance',
Alas! You will be reborn as an ogre.
By way of retribution for indulging your lust in your 'sexual rite',
Alas! You will be reborn as a uterine worm.
You worship the Three Jewels with flesh, blood and urine,
Ignorant of 'enigmatic' terminology you practise the rite literally,
A Mahāyānist such as this, will surely be reborn as a demon.
What a strange Buddhist adhering to such practices!
If these practices, like yours, bring about Buddahood,
Then hunters, fishermen, butchers and prostitutes,
Would all surely have attained Englightenment by now.

(III) All of you tantrists, village specialists,
Must not say "we are Mahāyānist",
And must reject the erroneous views.
Practice that which is taught in the Threefold Scriptures and that which is correct and pure!

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*sgrub* rites (*NgD*, p.451): *gzugs brnyan la dgra de'i brla (bla) bkug nas sgrol ba yin la/ mi dngos su sgrol bar ma gsungs so/*- "Summoning the 'soul' of the enemy to an 'effigy', one 'delivers' him. It is not attested (in tantras) to kill a man directly". In this sense, *sgrol ba* is usually understood, see n. 34. *Cf.* also Stein, 1977-78: 649-53 and Article No.19.



Confess the ten evils that you have committed so far!
If you do not, and continue to practise the false religion,
Karmic retribution will not escape you.
According to the Word which the Teacher himself pronounced,
It is true that Dharmatā is said to be void,
But you ought also to take karmic retribution into consideration.
*Karma* does not deceive anyone, it follows.
It does not turn itself into the four elements.
Since the misery of the three evil rebirths is hard to bear,
Reject these terrible practices and practise that which is taught in the Threefold Scriptures!
Those who wish to be Mahāyānist
Must accumulate the two kinds of merit and abandon the notion of grasping and that which is to be grasped.
Must practise the ten perfections, alms giving, etc.,
Must achieve all the practices of a Bodhisattva.
Must accomplish the welfare of living beings through love and compassion.
If you practise religion in this way, then you will be Mahāyānist!
This advice sent to you, 'Ba'-'ji-ba, means,
You should not abandon the practice of Mahāyāna, but keep it close.
Intellect is obscured by the massy darkness of ignorance,
Consciousness sinks into the mud of the ocean of lust,
Weighed down into evil rebirths by a great mounting of pride,
Carried away into the cycle of existence by the whirling storms of jealousy,
Bound with the tight knot of egotism,
Is it not difficult to bring oneself to salvaton?

Sent to the Tibetan tantrists by the *lha bla ma*, king of Pu-hrangs.

**Tibetan Text** (*NgD*, pp. 438-443)
Phu hrangs kyi rgyal po lha bla ma'i zhal mnga' (snga) nas/ bod yul dbus kyi sngags pa rnams la brdzangs pa/ gnyan po mdzad cing lta ba bsrang bar zhu'o/
(I) 'o skol mi mjed lho yi dzam gling 'dir/
ston pa sākya thub pa sku bltams te/
brgyad khri bzhi stong nyon mongs gnyen po ru/
sde snod gsum dang brgyad khri bzhi stong gsung (gsungs)/
rgyu dang gnyen po don du gsungs pa ni/
mi dge bcu dang mtshams med rnam pa lnga/
de las bzlog pa'i chos yi rgyu 'bras ni/
bden bzhi'i sgor zhugs nyis brgya lnga bcu gsung) (gsungs)/

mthong dang goms pas nyon mongs brgyad cu gnyis/
nyan thos theg pa nyi ma'i gnyen gyis gsung (gsungs)/
phyi nang chos rnams rten 'brel bcu gnyis su/
rtogs nas rang gi byang chub rim gyi (gyis) sgrub/
ya ma zung gi rdzu 'phrul mthu ldan pa/
rang rgyal theg par...(Two syllables are missing) mgon pos bstan/
bden pa gnyis kyis 'gro ba'i don mdzad cing/
phyi nang chos rnams stong pa'i ngo bor mkhyen/
pha rol phyin rnams rim gyis rdzogs mdzad pa/
bla na med pa'i theg par ston pas gsung (gsungs)/

(II) grong na gnas pa'i mkhan po sngags pa rnams/
theg pa de gsum gang dang 'brel med par/
nged cag theg chen yin zhes zer ba ni (dang)/
theg pa chen po'i tshul spyod gtan med par/
theg pa chen po yin zhes zer ba ni/
sprang po (pos) rgyal po yin zhes zer ba 'dra/
theg chen min pa theg chen khas 'che ba/
bong bu (bus) seng ge'i phags (pags) pa gyon pa 'dra/
bzung (gzung) 'dzin gnyis spang (spangs) tshogs chen gnyis rdzogs pa'/
sa bcu'i rgyal tshab 'phags pa byams pa yang/
shes bya'i sgrib pa da dung ma byang na/
de bas snyigs ma'i sems can 'phags sam ci/
'dod lnga bu mad (bud med) rdzab las ma thar bar/
chos kyi sku yin zer ba ya mtshan che/
mi dge bcu spyod khyi phag brtul zhugs can/
mu stegs 'ba' 'ji ba yi chos spyod khyed/
nged cag sangs rgyas yin zhes zer ba ni/
bdud kyis bslus sam yang na smyo bar nges/
mna' sngon bod yul dbus su chos byung ba/
ngan song sgo gcod thar ba'i lam ston pa/
sde snod rin chen gsum po dar zhing rgyas/
sngon gyi rgyal po byang chub sems dpa'i yi/
bka' dang bstun nas chos log 'di bkag ste/
kun gyi lta bsrang mtho ris sgo phye bas/
sems can mang po bla med lam du chud/
da lta las zad rgyal po'i khrims nyams pas/
rdzogs chen ming btags chos log bod du dar/
lta ba phyin ci log gi sar thogs pa/
chos par ming btags sngags log bod du bar/
de yis rgyal khams phung ste 'di ltar gyur/
sgrol ba dar bas ra lug nyal thag bcad/



sbyor ba dar bas mi rigs 'chol ba 'dres/
sman sgrub dar bas nad pas gso rkyen chad/[50]
bam sgrub dar bas dur sa'i mchod pa stong/
mchod sgrub dar bas mi la gson sgrol byung/
sring po sha za mchod pas mi nad phyugs nad byung/
me bsur dud pa btang bas yul gyi lha klu 'phangs/
de ltar spyod pa theg chen yin nam ci/
khyed cag grong gi mkhan po sngags pa'i spyod tshul 'di/
rgyal khams gzhan du thos na gzhan dag ngo mtshar rgyu/
nged cag sangs rgyas yi no zer ba'i spyod pa ni/
las kyi srin po bas ni snying rje chung/
khra dang spyang ku bas ni sha dad che/
bong reng gland reng bas ni 'dod chags che/
khang rul sbur khog bas ni skyur dad che/
khyi dang phag pa bas ni gtsang btsog chung/
gtsang ma lha'i rigs la dri chen dang/
dri chu khu khrag dag gis mchod 'bul bas/
ro syag 'dam du skye ba snying re rje/
sde snod gsum gyi chos la bskur btab pas/
mnar med dmyal bar skye ba snying re rje/
sgrol bas srog chags bsad pa'i rnam smin gyis/
las kyis (kyi) srin por skye ba snying re rje/
sbyor bas 'dod chags dar ba'i rnam smin gyis/
mngal gyi srin 'bur skye ba snying re rje/
sha khrag gcin gyis dkon mchog gsum mchod cing/
ldem dgongs mi shes drang thad chos spyod pa/
gnod sbyin srin por skye ba theg chen pa/
de ltar spyod pa'i sangs rgyas e ma mtshar/
khyed kyi spyod pa 'di kas sangs rgya na/
brngon (rngon) pa nya pa gshan (shan) pa smad 'tshong ma/
gcig kyang ma lus byang chub thob par nges/

(III) khyed cag grong gi mkhan po sngags pa kun/
nged cag theg chen yin zhes ma zer bar/
phyin ci log gi lta ba di spong la/
ma nor dri med sde snod gsum la spyod/
snga phyogs mi dge bcu spyad mthol bshags gyis/
de ltar ma spyad chos log 'di spyad na/
las kyi rnam par smin pas mi bslu ste/
ston pa'i zhal nas gsung pa'i bka' dag las/
chos nyid stong par gsung (gsungs) pa bden mod kyi/

50. For this line Sog-zlog-pa gives another version: *sman sgrub dar bas khyi phag 'tsho ba chad/* He considers this incorrect.

las kyi rnam par smin pa yid ches byos/
las rnams mi bslu rang gi phyi bzhin 'brangs/
'byung ba bzhi la rnam smin mi 'gyur bar/
ngan song gsum gyi sdug bsngal mi bzod pas/
spyod ngan 'di spong sde snod gsum po spyod/
theg pa chen por smon cing 'dod pa rnams/
tshogs gnyis bsog cing bzung (gzung) dzin rnam gnyis spong/
sbyin pa la sogs pha rol phyin bcu spyod/
byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa mtha' dag sgrubs/
byams dang snying rjes 'gro don rdzogs par gyis/
de ltar spyod pa theg pa chen po yin/
khyed cag 'ba' 'ji rnams la skur (bskur) ba 'dis/
theg chen spyod pa ma bor bsnyen par gyis/
gti mug mun pa'i tshogs kyis shes rab rmongs/
'dod chags rgya mtsho'i 'dam du rnam shes byings/
nga rgyal chen po'i ri bos ngan 'gror mnan/
phrag dogs rlung dmar 'tshub mas 'khor bar g.yengs/
bdag tu 'dzin pa'i mdud pa dam pos bcings/
thar ba thob pa dka' mor mi mchi'am/
pu hrangs kyi rgyal po lha bla mas bod kyi sngags pa rnams l
brdzangs pa rdzogs so//

Concerning the term *'ba' 'ji* (n. 30) I am grateful to Per Kvaerne for th following information: 'In the *Caryāgītikośa*, song 17, line 5 run *nācanti bājila gānti debī "The Holder-of-the-Vajra dances, the Godde sings"*. *Bājila* must be derived from *vajrin*, *cf.* Shahidulah, *Chant mystiques*, p. 104 where *bājira* is transated *rdo rje sems dpa'*. In th present case Munidatta's commentary glosses: *Vīnapādā vajradhara-paden nrtyam kurvanti, = Pi-wang zhabs-te/ rdo rje 'dzin-pa'i go-'phang-gi ga byed-pa'o/'*.

Charles Ramble found out that the word *'ba' ji ba* may well be connecte with the term *bijuwa* with the sense of 'sorcerer' (R. Turner, *Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali Language*, Ne Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1980).



# An Open Letter by Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od

The important role that Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od[1] played in re-establishing Buddhism in Tibet in the second half of the eleventh century has been rather neglected by Tibetan Buddhist historians and consequently by Western writers on the history of Tibetan Buddhism. It is all the more surprising that this prince monk has become so obscure a figure when we know that he acted not only as a royal patron for many translators but was also a *lo tsā ba* of considerable importance. He is usually mentioned in connection with his decree or open letter (*bka' shog*) which I propose to study in this article. There is absolutely nothing known with regard to his personal life, but nevertheless we have a few records of his religious activities scattered in the corpus of *K* and *T*.



*Plate 1: Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od from Gyantse Kubum (SGK 1987)*

As a translator, he is the first in the Tibetan royal family.[2] Most sources agree that he is a younger brother of lHa-btsun Byang-chub-'od. In several colophons Zhi-ba-'od uses the title of the early Tibetan kings, *bod kyi dpal lha btsan po* or simply *dpal lha btsan po* for himself.[3] The use of the last two titles is perhaps a question of style rather than an indication of the real sense of the titles as

1. i.e. Zhi-ba-'od of the Palace. The palace was known as sKu-mkhar Nyi-gzungs in Pu-hrangs, *BTChB*, p. 894.
2. The second is the *lha* Ye-shes rgyal-mtshan (*T* Vol. 64, No. 2713). In his *YN* (p. 455) Bu-ston mentions a translator known as the *lha rin po che*. This title suggests that the bearer had a connection with the royal family, but he remains unidentified.
3. Translation colophons by Zhi-ba-'od, Nos. 1 and 2, see below.

king. The fact that he was an important member of the royal family in Western Tibet might have allowed him to use such titles. It is known that the line of the kings in Pu-hrangs during this period passed from lHa-lde through 'Od-lde and rTse-lde who held the royal lineage and exercised royal powers. They are described as *rgyal rigs skyong ba'i rgyal po*.[4] Byang-chub-'od and Zhi-ba-'od, on the other hand, became monks. Zhi-ba-'od never misses the opportunity to describe himself as *dge slong bla ma* or *śākya'i dge slong lha bla ma*.[5] He lived in a period in which his brother 'Od-lde was the king of Pu-hrangs, followed later on by his nephew, rTse-lde who came to the throne. However, in one of the translation colophons Zhi-ba-'od actually calls himself *bod kyi rgyal po*, the king of Tibet.[6] Indeed, the *lo tsā ba* Blo-ldan shes-rab (1059-1109) and his contemporary Mangs-ngor Byang-chub shes-rab describe him as *bod kyi btsan po*. The former extends the title by adding *'phrul gyi rgyal po*.[7]

Zhi-ba-'od must have spent a great part of his life in Tho-ling[8] in Gu-ge if we judge from the amount of translation he made in this place. Besides he would have had other affairs to attend to being a royal personage. However, we do not have any records showing what kind of function he held in Tho-ling. Around the fourth quarter of the eleventh century Tho-ling was no longer simply a temple. It had already become the centre of learning in Western Tibet having the character of the later Tibetan great monasteries. Zhi-ba-'od being an important member of the royal family in Pu-hrangs and a translator would be in high authority and it would not be far-fetched to assume that he exercised a certain amount of politico-religious power over the religious establishments of his ancestors, and the local people in Gu-ge when Byang-chub-'od was no longer active. It is probably due to this position of his that he is described as 'king'. The very title *pho brang* suggests that he did not ascend the throne of sKu-mkhar Nyi-gzungs. On the other hand, his nephew rTse-lde bears the title *khri* which clearly shows that he occupied the throne. The other royal personage who bears the title *pho brang* is 'Od-srung,[9] but he also bears the title *khri*[10] which presumably was given at later stage when he ascended the throne in Central Tibet. The appearance of the title *pho brang* with the words like *bod kyi rgyal po* or *btsan po*[11] further confirms the tendency of using them as styles on the part of Zhi-ba-'od himself and the translators who eulogise him. H. Richardson (1971: 434) in his most

4. *ChJ*, p. 344-2-2.
5. Translation colophons by Zhi-ba-'od, Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, see below.
6. Translation colophons by Zhi-ba-'od, No, 3, see below.
7. Translations made under the order of Zhi-ba-'od, Nos. II, III, see below.
8. *Cf.* Tucci, 1936: 7, 119.
9. *PT* 131.
10. *PT* 999.
11. Translation colophons by Zhi-ba-'od, No. 3, see below.



interesting article suggests that the title *pho brang* may indicate that the bearer is not a prince of the royal blood, but that meaning does not fit with the case of Zhi-ba-'od. According to G. Tucci's suggestion that the title is for a second son of a ruling family[12] may appear correct with the case of Zhi-ba-'od, but does not work with 'Od-srung.[13]

Although Byang-chub-'od is famous for his strenuous efforts in inviting Atīśa, there is hardly any record of his acting as patron for translators, not to mention engaging himself in the activities of a *lo tsā ba*. However, according to the Fifth Dalai Lama, he was a translator of high standing (*lo tsā la shin tu mkhas pa*),[14] but *K* and *T* contain no translations under his name. Under the name of Zhi-ba-'od, on the other hand, there are six major translations and also three important texts translated at his command and that of rTse-lde.

### Translation colophons (*'gyur byang*) of texts translated by Zhi-ba-'od

1. Translation colophon of *Śrīvajramālatantra:* [15]
   *thugs dam sa'i snying po* [16] *tho ling dpal med lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang du rgya gar gyi mkhan po su ja na śri jña na dang/ sgra bsgyur gyi lo tsā ba chen po bod kyi lha btsan po bla ma dge slong zhi ba'i 'od kyi zhal snga nas bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o*, "Translated, edited and studied by the great *lo-tsā-ba* and *bhikṣu* Zhi-ba'i-'od who is the *lha btsan po* of Tibet, with the assistance of the Upādhyāya Sujanaśrījñāna in the temple of Tho-ling, dPal-med lhun-gyis grub-pa, the sanctuary (of the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od) and the heart of the land".

The phrase *thugs dam sa'i snying po* occurs in other places as *byang chub sems dpa'i thugs dam*,[17] 'the sanctuary of the Bodhisattva', that is the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od, or *yab myes kyi thugs dam*,[18] 'the sanctuary of the grand father'. Ye-shes-'od is considered to be a Bodhisattva.[19] In his extremely useful article, De Jong (1972: 520) has translated the phrase as "Tho liṅ, le Centre du Pays du Voeu". D. T. Suzuki editing the volume number 3 of *K* has left out the name of Zhi-ba-'od in the 'contents' of the volume. Consequently the work which is

12. Tucci, 1956: 52, n. 1.
13. Richardson, 1971: 434.
14. *Bod kyi deb ther dpyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* (Varanasi 1967), pp. 106-7.
15. *K* Vol. 3, No. 82, p. 232-41.
16. The original text reads: *sa'i snying po tho ling snying po...*
17. Translation colophons by Zhi-ba-'od, No. 4 (B), see below.
18. Translation made under the order of Zhi-ba-'od, No. II.
19. *Cf. ChJ*, p. 344-1-2 and Article No. 1, p. 4.

number 82 does not occur at all under the name of Zhi-ba-'od in the index.[20]

2. Translation colophon of *Śrīparamādyatantra:*[21]
*thugs dam pa'i (sa'i) snying po tho ling du/ rgya gar gyi mkhan po pandita chen po man tra ka la śa dang/ sgra bsgyur gyi lo tstshā ba lha btsan po dge slong bla ma zhi ba'i 'od kyi zhal snga nas bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o/*

As this colophon is almost the same as number 1 we shall deal only with the main point. In making a translation of this text, Zhi-ba-'od states that he worked with the *paṇḍita* Mantrakālaśa in Tho-ling. D. T. Suzuki this time has taken the title *lha btsan po* as the name of a separate translator, thus giving two names: "Lha btsan po, Shi ba'i 'od." Zhi-ba-'od here adds four verses to this colophon explaining why he translated this work:

*lo tsa chen po rin chen bzang po yis/*
*dpal mchog dang po'i* rgyud rgyud 'di 'di *bsgyur ba la/*
*bar bar dpe ma rnyed pas ma 'gyur nas/*
*bdag gis 'bad pas dpe btsal rnyed pas bsgyur/*[22]

De Jong translates these lines as follows:
"Moi, le grand traducteur Rin-chen bzang-po, je me suis efforcé de chercher des textes et, après les avoir obtenus, j'ai traduit les passages qui ne furent pas traduits lors de la traduction de ce *Śrīparamādyatantra* parce que (les traducteurs) n'en avaient pas obtenu un texte."[23]

However, this should rather be translated as:
"The great translator Rin-chen bzang-po (958-1055);
Began to translate this *Śrīpramādyatantra,*
But no copies of the Sanskrit text (of certain parts) being available
(at the time, a therefore unable) to make he was translation (of the missing parts).
I (Zhi-ba-'od) searched for the Sanskrit copy (of the missing parts) with effort
and having found them made the translation of them."[24]

20. *T* Vol. 168, Catalogue 4, Index, p. 193.
21. *K* Vol. 5, No. 120, p. 173-1-6.
22. *K* Vol. 5, No. 120, p. 173-1-7.
23. *K* Vol. 5, No. 120, pp.526--27.
24. The fact that the translator of this work is Zhi-ba-'od and not Rin-chen bzang-po is also confirmed by *BTChB*, p. 985.



3. Translation colophon of *Sahajamaṇḍala:*[25]
*bod kyi rgyal po pho rang (brang) zhi ba 'od kyis gsol ba btab nas bsgyur ba'o/*
"Translated by the king of Tibet, Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od, after having said prayers."

Zhi-ba-'od indicates here that he made the translation of his own accord. However, in his magnificent catalogue, P. Cordier (1908: XVI, 20) translates the colophon as follows: "T. Shi-ba-'od (Śântiprabha), traduction exécutée à la demande du roi du Tibet."

4. *dPal mchog dang po'i rgya cher bshad pa:*[26]
The first part of this commentary (*stod 'grel*) of *Śrīparamādyatantra* was translated by Lo-chen Rin-chen bzang-po.[27] The second part of the commentary (*smad 'grel*) with which we are concerned was translated by Zhi-ba-'od.[28] There are two translation colophons by him:

A. *rgya gar gyi mkhan po pandita mkhas pa chen po man tra ka la śa dang sgra bsgyur gyi lo tsā ba chen po bod kyi dpal lha btsan po bla ma dge slong zhi ba'i 'od kyi zhal snga nas bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o/*[29]

B. *gu ge'i yul gyi dbus/ byang chub sems dpa'i thugs dam sa'i snying po dpal dpe med lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang du/ rgya gar gyi mkhan po chen po man tra ka la śa dang sgra bsgyur gyi lo tsā ba chen po/ bod kyi dpal lha btsan po byang chub sems dpa'i gdung brgyud lha bla ma dge slong zhi ba 'od kyi zhal snga nas bsgyur cing gtan la phab pa'o/*[30]

The main points in these two colophons are the translation which Zhi-ba-'od made with the assistance of the *paṇḍita* Mantrakālaśa in Tho-ling. We have already dealt with the problem of *byang chub sems dpa'i thugs dam.* The other interesting point in colophon B is the question of *byang chub sems dpa'i gdung brgyud* which we shall have occasion to discuss later. Further, Zhi-ba-'od adds to colophon B a eulogy to the achievements of the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od and Rin-chen bzang-po and finally to his own Indian master Mantrakālaśa. This eulogy is at the same time an important historical document. It gives a concise account of the general background of the religious problem with which his grandfather,

25. *K* Vol. 52, No. 2250, p. 182-3-3.
26. *K* Vol. 72, No. 3335.
27. *K* Vol. 72, No. 3335, pp. 177-2-3- p. 273-1.
28. *K* Vol. 72, No. 3335, p. 275—Vol. 73, p. 213-1-2. However, *YN* (p. 508) has the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od as the traslator instead of Zhi-ba-'od. This is certainly an error, see *BTChB*, p. 1000.
29. *K* Vol. 73, p. 52-1-7.
30. *K* Vol. 73, p. 212-4-6.

the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od and Rin-chen bzang-po had to deal and it states that he too carried on the campaign.[31]

D. T. Suzuki in editing *T* volumes 72 and 73 has left the entire translation of the second part of the commentary under the name of Rin-chen bzang-po so that it passes with the number 3335, in spite of these two important colophons written by Zhi-ba-'od himself. Suzuki himself however does note this irregularity in a footnote.[32]

5. Translation colophon of *Tattvasamgrakārika:*[33]
*gu ge yul gyi dbyed (dben) sa ro ve dge gnas phun tshogs gling du/ rgya gar gyi mkhan po rig pa'i 'byung gnas kha che'i grong khyer dpe med na/ rgyal po chen po la li ta ste tyas mdzad pa'i chos kyi pandita chen po gu na ka ra śri bha dra'i zhal snga nas dang/ sgra bsgyur gyi lo tsā ba chen po dpal lha btsan po śākya'i dge slong lha bla ma zhi ba 'od kyi zhal snga nas gyis bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa/*

In this colophon Zhi-ba-'od states that he made the translation with the assistance of the *paṇḍita* Guṇāśrībhadra in the hermitage of Ro-ve, dGe-gnas phun-tshogs-gling in Guge, and that the *paṇḍita* is very learned in the works by Lalitasteya and that he comes from the Kashmiri city of Anupamapura. D. T. Suzuki once more has taken the title *dpal lha btsan po* as a separate name: "Tr. Guṇāśrībhadra, dPal Lha btsan-po, Shi-ba-hod".

6. Translation colophon of *Kalāpalaghuvṛttanśiṣyahitā:*[34]
*lha bla-ma zhi ba 'od kyis zhang zhung gi sa cha/ tho ling gser gyi gtsug lag khang du bsgyur ba'o/*
"Translated by the *lha bla ma* Zhi-ba-'od at the golden temple of Tho-ling, in the land of Zhang-zhung".

### Translations of texts made under the order and patronage of Zhi-ba-'od

I. Translation colophon of *Vādanyāyanāmaprakaraṇa:* [35]
*dpal lha btsan po btsun pa zhi ba 'od kyi zhal snga nas dang/ dpal lha btsan po khri bkra shis mnga' bdag rtse lde btsan gyi zhal snga nas kyis (kyi) bkas/ rgya gar gyi mkhan po chen po jñāna śri bha dra'i zhal snga nas dang/ dge slong dge ba'i blo gros kyis bsgur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o/*

31. *Cf.* Article No. 1, p. 6.
32. *T* Vol. 166, Catalogue 2, p. 350.
33. *T* Vol. 138, No. 5764, p. 199-5-6.
34. *T* Vol. 140, No. 5777, p. 67-4-5.
35. *T* Vol. 130, No. 5715, p. 162-2-5.



The *bhikṣu* dGe-ba'i blo-gros who is usually known as rMa *lo tsā ba* and a disciple of Rin-chen bzang-po records in this colophon that he made the translation with the assistance of the Indian monk Jñānaśībhadra under the order of Zhi-ba-'od and the king rTse-lde.

II. The *lo tsā ba* Blo-ldan shes-rab (1059-1109) gives a short but succinct account of the religious activities of his royal patrons and contemporary Indian and Tibetan scholars in Tho-ling. This is found in the second colophon of his translation of the text Pramāṇavārttālaṃkāra.[36] A part of this second colophon is quoted and translated here:
*bod kyi dpal lha btsan po/ rigs gsum mgon po'i sprul ba/ byang chub sems dpa'i gdung brgyud/ mi rje lhas mdzad pa/ 'phrul gyi rgyal po śākya'i dge slong lha bla ma zhi ba 'od kyi zhal snga nas dang/ dbang phyug dam pa'i mga' bdag chen po khri bkra shis tse (rtse) lde btsan gyi zhal snga nas rgyal po'i yang rgyal po chen po khu dbon gyi sku ring la/ bod kyi rgyal khams su bstan pa rin po che dar shing rgyas par mdzad pa'i slad du/ yon gyi bdag po chen po mdzad de/ 'gyur ma dag pa kun bcos shing/ ma 'gyur ba rnams bsgyur ba dang/ dam pa'i chos rgya cher bshad cing/ chos mi mthun pa rnams gtan la dbab pa'i sgo nas/ bod 'bangs yongs la drin bzhag pa'i thugs dgongs kyis rgya gar dbus bhra ka ma śi la'i gtsug lag khang chen po mkhas pa mang po 'byung ba'i gnas nas/paṇḍita mkhas pa chen po dpal su na ya śrī mi tra dka' ba chen pos spyan drangs/ kha che'i grong khyer dpe med nas kyi paṇḍita mkhas pa ku ma ra śrī spyan drangs/ bod nas dbus gtsang ru bzhi dang/ khams rgya'i so yan chad kyi ston pa ma lus pa dang/ stod mnga' ris skor gsum gyi ser chags ma lus pa tsam zhabs drung chen por tshogs/ stod smad kyi lo tstsha ba mkha pa yang drug bsogs nas/ yab med (myes) khu dbon gyi thugs dam/ sa'i snying po tho ling dpal dpe med lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang chen por paṇḍita dang/ gzhi(bsgyur) byed kyi mkhas pa rnams kyis theg pa phyi nang gi chos grva mang por dpal ldan dam pa'i las la mngon dgyes pa/...*[37]

"During their life time, the *lha btsan po* of Tibet, emanation of the protectors of the three families (*kula*), the descendant of the Bodhisattva, the god who reigns over man, the king of sagacity,[38] the *bhikṣu* of the

36. *T* Vol. 132, No. 5719.
37. *T* Vol. 132, No. 5719, p. 295-3-8.
38. This title is probably derived from *'phrul gyi lha btsan po*, which was at first used for the king Khri lDe-srong-btsan and then mostly for Khri gTsug-lde-btsan. For Stein (1981), the title *'phrul gyi lha* is the equivalent of a Chinese imperial title, but this thesis is not accepted, *cf.* Snellgrove (1987: 381, n. 2). The title *'phrul gyi rgyal po* is

Śākya clan, the *lha bla ma* Zhi-ba-'od and the might, sacred, great lord King bKra-shis rTse-lde-btsan - the uncle and nephew[39] who are the kings of kings - acted as great patrons in order to spread the doctrine far and wide in the kingdom of Tibet. The incorrect translations were revised. New translations were made. The sacred religion was widely taught and those of which doctrines were not in harmony were examined. In order to leave their legacy to all Tibetan subjects, they with great perseverance invited the *paṇḍita* Sunyaśrīmitra from Vikramaśīla, the great seat of many scholars in Magadha in India, and also the *paṇḍita* Kumāraśrī from the Kashmiri city of Anupamapura. Many masters from Central Tibet, and Khams reaching as far as the frontier of China and nearly all the monks from mNga'-ris gathered together in the presence of (the kings). Also the six *lo tsā ba*[40] of the Upper and Lower Lands were invited. The *paṇḍita* and *lo tsā ba* were glad to study the doctrine in the temple dPal dpe-med lhun-gyis grub-pa of Tho-ling, being the heart of the land and the sanctuary of the ancestors, the uncle and nephew (i.e. the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od and lHa-btsun Byang-chub-'od)..."

Blo-ldan shes-rab goes on to state in this same colophon that he made the translation of the text in Kashmir with the help of the *paṇḍita* sKal-ldan rgyal-po.[41] This statement shows that the gathering in Tho-ling took place before his departure for Kashmir. He attended the 'Religious Council of the Fire-dragon' held in 1076 when he was eighteen. Although there is no mention of the word *chos 'khor* in this account, it is nonetheless certainly a description of the Religious Council held by the king rTse-lde.[42] Therefore the account is a contemporary record. However, it does not give any date for the event. 'Gos gZhon-nu-dpal (1392-1481) on his part fails to mention both Zhi-ba-'od and the place where the council was held.

In this colophon, a part of which we have quoted above, there are several phrases of eulogy which precede the regal titles. One of these is *rigs gsum mgon po'i sprul ba*. The three *rigs* here refer to Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi who are traditionally represented by the kings Srong-btsan sgam-po (d.649), Khri Srong-lde-btsan (b. 742-d. c. 797) and

used for Khri 'Dus-srong (Bacot *et al*, 1949: 113) and Khri Srong-lde-btsan (the letter of Buddhaguhya, *T* Vol. 129, No. 5693, p. 284-1-5: *rlung nam*(?) *'phrul gyi rgyal po...*, and *BMS*, p. 84-1-4). The other figure bearing this title is the mythical character Kong-tse (Confucius) in Bonpo works such as *ZM*, Vol. II, ff. 77a2 *et seq.* *Cf.* also Article No.10.

39. P. Cordier (1908: mDo XCIX) states that the uncle and nephew are Byang-chub-'od and Zhi-ba-'od. This is not possible, see diagrams below.
40. It is not known to me exactly who these were. However, *BA*, pp. 71, 328 gives several Tibetan translators who attended the Religious Council.
41. *T* Vol. 132, No. 5719, p. 295-5-4; *TR*, p. 446.
42. *BA*, pp. 71, 328; *TR*, p. 446.



Khri gTsug-lde-btsan (b. 805) respectively in Tibetan Buddhist works.[43] The idea of some of the Tibetan kings as emanations of Bodhisattva probably goes back well beyond the eleventh century A.D. It is closely connected with their attribution as descendants of a Bodhisattva (*byang chub sems dpa'i gdung brgyud*). In the letter of Buddhagúhya, Khri Srong-lde-btsan is described as *rigs kyi sprul ba*, 'emanation of the family'.[44] Now, Mañjuśrī himself is also considered to be a *rigs kyi sprul ba* by Buddhajñānapāda[45] (eighth century A.D.).This phrase is explained as follows: "emanation of families, such as Tathāgata family, etc."[46] The reason for this is that Mañjuśrī himself originally is not a member of the three families. He is considered only to represent the Tathāgatakula.

It is interesting to note that Buddhaguhya should use the same terminology for Khri Srong lde-btsang while his master Buddhajñānapāda had used it for Mañjuśrī. On the other hand, the antiquity of Buddhaguhya's letter is somewhat doubtful, for in a prophecy, it alludes to either the story of the conflict between 'Od-srung and Yum-brtan or the quarrel between the two sons of dPal 'Khor-btsan,[47] but it had certainly gone through different recensions. The existence of a longer version is mentioned by dPal-mang dKon-mchog rgyal-mtshan (1764-1853).[48]

The phrase of *byang chub sems dpa'i gdung brgyud* might give the impression of the Bodhisattva being simply the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od in this particular colophon of Blo-ldan shes-rab, for in the case of *byang chub sems dpa'i thugs dam*, it is the *lha bla-ma* Ye-shes-'od.[49] However, the question is more complicated than it first appears. In *PT* 841, the king Tsa who is identified there with Khri Srong-lde-btsan is described as *lha'i rigs la byang chub sems dpa'i rgyu* (*brgyud*), 'of the *lha* family and descendant of the Bodhisattva.'[50] The Bodhisattva in this line would be none other than Srong-btsan sgam-po who is an emanation of Avalokiteśvara as we read the following lines in Buddhaguhya's letter: 'Srong-btsan sgam-po is the dynamic body of Avalokiteśvara. The line of the descendants of this Bodhisattva has not been cut'.[51]

The other regal title *dbang phyug dam pa'i mnga' bdag dpal lha btsan po* was used for the king Khri lDe-srong-btsan (b. 776) before the

43. *BZh* : *rigs gsum mgon po'i rnam 'phrul* (Stein, 1961:1)
44. *T* Vol. 129, No. 5693, p. 284-1-6.
45. *Kun tu bzang po zhes bya ba'i sgrub thabs*, *T* Vol. 65, No. 2718, p. 15-4-5.
46. *dPal kun tu bzang po'i sgrub thabs kyi 'grel-ba* (*T* Vol. 65, No. 2731, p. 92-2-2): *de bzhin gshegs pa la sogs pa'i rigs rnams yin pa...de yi sprul ba ni sprul bar byas pa'o/*
47. *T* Vol. 129, No. 5693, p. 284-3-1.
48. *DTs*, p. 221.
49. Translation colophons by Zhi-ba-'od, No. I.
50. *Cf.* Article No. 5, pp. 89-91.
51. *Srong btsan sgam po spyan ras gzigs kyi sku/ byang chub sems dpa'i sku brgyud gdung ma chad/* (*T* Vol. 129, No. 5693, p. 284-1-5).

eleventh century A.D. It mostly occurs in the translation colophons written by Cog-ro Klu'i rgyal-mtshan (towards the end of the eighth century A.D.) for those translations that were considered specially important.[52] The title *dpal lha btsan po* in the colophons written by this translator is either taken as a name of a translator or simply ignored by D. T. Suzuki[53] despite the fact that it occurs quite clearly and consistently as *dpal lha btsan po'i bka' lung gis,* 'by the order of...' M. Lalou asks whether *dpal lha btsan po* in the translation colophons of Cog-ro Klu'i rgyal-mtshan is Zhi-ba-'od. It is quite clear because of the difference in date that the title does not refer to Zhi-ba-'od.[54]

III. Translation colophon of *Pramāṇavarttikālaṃkāraṭīkā:*[55]
*bcom ldam rigs gsum mgon po'i sprul ba/ byang chub sems dpa'i gdung brgyud/ mi rje lhas mdzad pa(/) bod kyi btsan po śākya ('i) dge slong lha bla ma zhi ba 'od kyi zhal snga nas dang/ bod kyi lha btsan po dbang phyug dam pa'i mnga' bdag chen po khri bkra shis rtse lde btsan gyi zhal snga nas/ gyal po'i yang rgyal po chen po 'phrul gyi lha btsan po khu dbon gyi bkas/ thugs dam sa'i snying po tho ling dpal dpe med lhun gyi(s) grub pa'i gtsug lag khang du/ rgya gar gyi mkhan po dpal bi kra ma śi la'i mkhas pa chen po paṇḍita dīpam ka ra rak ṣi ta dang zhang zhung gi lo tsa ba chen po mang 'or bande byang chub shes rab kyis nan tan snying por byas nas gtan la phab par bsgyur ba'o/*

As this colophon is almost identical to the previous one, I have not translated, but the main points are as follows: Mang-ngor Byang-chub shes-rab[56] of Zhang-zhung made this translation with the assistance of Śrīdīpamkararakṣita in the temple of Tho-ling under the order of Zhi-ba-'od and rTse-lde, the uncle and nephew.

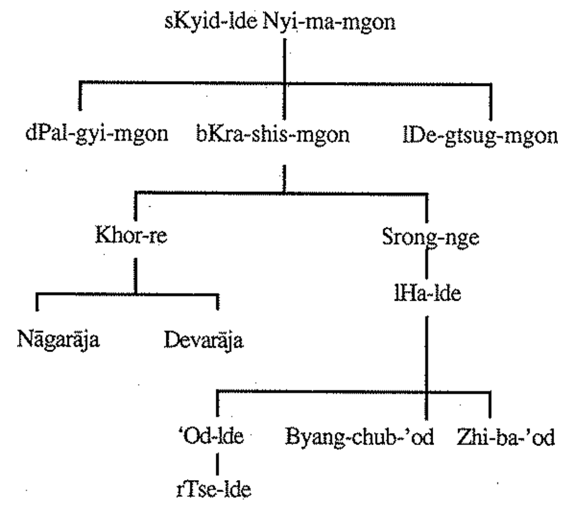
For the *khu dbon* in this colophon P. Cordier this time gives Ye-shes-'od and Byang-chub-'od.[57] The confusion created by this word *khu dbon* is therefore real. There are two different generations involved. The first one is the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od and lHa-btsun Byang-chub-'od who are generally known as *lha bla ma khu dbon.* In the second case, it is Zhi-ba-'od and rTse-lde, but who are called *khu dbon* less frequently. Here are

52. e.g. *T* Vol. 127, Nos. 563, 5638.
53. e.g. *T* Vol. 122, No. 5616 (here *lha btsan po* is treated as the name of an author by D.T. Suzuki); *T* Vol. 127, Nos. 5637, 5638.
54. Lalou, 1933: under *lha btsan po.*
55. *T* Vol. 133, No. 5720, p. 328-2-3.
56. One of the monks who attended the Religious Council of the year Fire-dragon (1076), *BA,* p. 32.
57. Cordier, 1908: *mDo* CII; *cf.* n. 39.

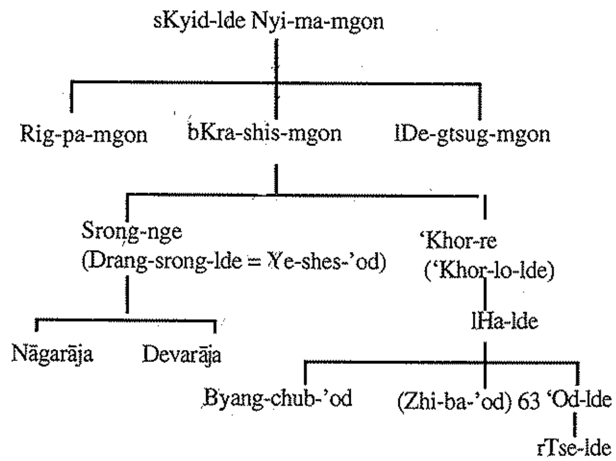


two diagrams which will show how they are related in the line of the royal family in Pu-hrangs.

*BA* pp.37, 244:




*YM* p.348:




*The bka' shog*

The earliest source found to date which refers to a *sngags log sun 'byin* of Zhi-ba-'od is *DR* of Sa-paṇ Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan (1182-1251): *de'i slob ma zhi ba 'od/ des kyang sngags log sun 'byin pa/ zhes bya'i*

*bstan bcos mdzad ces zer/*, "The disciple of him (Rin-chen bzang-po), Zhi-ba-'od is said to have written a 'refutation of the perverse tantras'."[58] Sa-paṇ uses the word '*zer*' which suggests that he did not see the actual work for himself. The next source which mentions a *spring yig* of Zhi-ba-'od is the *sNgags log sun 'byin shes rab ral gri* by Chag Chos-rje-dpal (1197-1264).[59] In his *BTChB*, Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub(1290-1364) also states that Zhi-ba-'od wrote a *sngags log sun 'byin*.[60] 'Bri-gung dPal-'dzin (fourteenth century) refers to a *spring yig* of Zhi-ba-'od.[61] A similar work of Zhi-ba-'od was also known to rGyang-ro Byang-chub-'bum (early fourteenth century).[62] Finally while Śākya mchog-ldan (1428-1507) refers to a *sngags log sun 'byin* of Zhi-ba-'od,[63] Sum-pa Ye-shes dpal-'byor (1704-1788) makes an explicit mention of a *bka' shog* of Zhi-ba-'od.[64] These are just a few examples of references to a refutation by Zhi-ba-'od made through the centuries. However, we have no means to verify whether all these sources allude to one work or several, since neither Sa-paṇ nor Bu-ston quotes from the work which they mention, nor do they describe its contents. The only author who quotes from the *bka' shog* is rGyang-ro Byang-chub-'bum. Although he gives no title of the work from which he quotes, it is identical to the text of the *bka' shog* found in *NgD*.

The terms *sun 'byin, spring yig, dgag yig* or *'byam yig* generally designate a work devoted to a subject of controversy. While a *spring yig* is simply a letter, *bka' shog* or *chab shog* is usually an open letter issued by a person of high authority and so has an official character. The phrase *sngags log sun 'byin* on the other hand describes the nature of the content of a work concerned with the question of authenticity of tantric works. It is not necessarily always written by a person of high position.

The *bka' shog* of Zhi-ba-'od, reproduced and commented upon by Sog-zlog-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1552-1624) is therefore most likely the one alluded to by all the above sources in spite of the divergence in the descriptions. Sog-zlog-pa gives the entire text of the *bka' shog* and it is this text that I have extracted and edited.[65] This is the only copy I have been able to locate. For the most part, it is simply a list of titles of Buddhist works and it is often hard to distinguish one title from the other, not to mention the problem of identifying the texts. While the authenticity of some of the works is doubted, others are simply declared to be false or apocryphal. As it ignores the authors of most of the works and

58. p. 319-2-5.
59. Xylographic edition of bKra-shis-'khyil, f. 5b, 6.
60. p. 1049.
61. *Ch*, p. 277.
62. *LShDT*, p. 567.
63. *STh*, p. 82.
64. *PJ*, f. 250b.
65. *NgD*, pp. 462-67.



is unconcerned with giving any account of their contents, a number of them therefore remain unidentified in the present article. Because of the obscure nature that clouds over the *bka' shog* and the Tibetan titles of religious works that generally can either be extended or abridged, the identifications of the texts with the ones found in e.g. *NyG* or *K* and *T* must be considered as solely tentative or provisional.

The *bka' shog* begins with a short introduction which states that it was issued in the year of the water-monkey. We shall deal with the problem of this date below. It is divided roughly into three parts, but these are not entirely clear-cut. Neither is it good in structure and coherence. For this reason Sog-zlog-pa remarks that Zhi-ba-'od being a 'king', did not have much time to concentrate on his studies.[66]

The first part contains names of tantric works belonging to the tradition that is later known as the rNying-ma-pa school.

The second part gives the titles of tantras which belong to what the *bka' shog* calls the 'recent tantric tradition', but also contains some titles of rDzogs chen texts which should be in the first part. The second part is followed up by a strong appeal to those who practise the tantric teachings for the need of strict observation of the monastic discipline. It points out that practising the tantras belonging to the group of *shes rab kyi rgyud* causes problems with monastic vows, and therefore this teaching can be dispensed with. This appeal is followed by a condemnation of the rDzogs chen thought of which it claims has been influenced by the view of the *mu stegs can* (*tīrthika*), i.e. non-Buddhist philosophical and religious schools in India.[67]

The third part deals with the works created by Tibetans of which Zhi-ba-'od does not approve. It finishes with a short epilogue in which Zhi-ba-'od allows himself to be known as an upholder of the bKa'-gdams-pa tradition.

**The date of the *bka' shog***

To determine the water-monkey date (*chu sprel*) of the *bka' shog* is imperative since it contains so many titles of various works which are of considerable importance. In the paper I read at the XXIXth Congress of Orientalists in Paris[68] I preferred the date 1032 for the year water-monkey out of three possible dates for the following reason: Zhi-ba-'od is not mentioned in connection with the 'Religious Council of the Fire-dragon' (1076). 'Gos gZhon-nu-dpal describing the council states that it was held by the king rTse-lde and no mention is made of Zhi-ba-'od. Further research however shows that the council was held under the patronage of

66. *NgD*, p. 475.
67. *Cf.* Article No. 5.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

both Zhi-ba-'od and rTse-lde as evidenced by the contemporary account of the council given by Blo-ldan shes-rab. Moreover, at the end of the *bka' shog* it stresses the religious tradition (*chos brgyud*) of the bKa'-gdams-pa. Now in 1032 this school did not yet exist since Atīśa arrived in Tibet only in 1042. The 1092 is therefore the only other alternative for the water-monkey in the later period of the eleventh century A.D. The *bka' shog* mentions a certain number of works which however do not necessarily help to confirm even this date. For example, texts Nos. 47-52 are all ascribed to the mysterious figure, the *ācārya* dMar-po. It therefore incidentally identifies this master with Prajñāgupta (Shes-rab gsang-ba) of Oḍḍiyāna, for texts numbered above are to be found in *K* and *T* as works and translations under this name. A certain number of these texts are translated by Kam Chos-kyi shes-rab and Phyug-'tshams dGra-bcom *alias* dBang-phyug rgya-mtsho[69] with the assistance of the master just mentioned. It is therefore certain that the master dMar-po is another name of Prajñāgupta. According to *BA*, the master came to Tibet twice, once before the time of Atīśa's arrival in Tibet and another visit was made in the late eleventh century. it further states that on the second visit Sa-chen Kun-dga' snying-po (1092-1158) became a disciple of the master.[70] This is confirmed by Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan (1147-1216) in his *BMS*.[71]

The master dMar-po is usually accredited with the teachings of sexual practices in a tantric context (*chags lam thig le*). This shows that he was an adept of the *ma rgyud* tantras. Precisely texts Nos. 47-52 were considered to belong to the group of the *Hevajratantra*.[72] The preaching of the *chags lam thig le* by this master is usually given as one of the reasons for inviting Atīśa. Because of Atīśa's disapproval of the teaching, the master dMar-po was the object of criticism by those who upheld the tradition of the *pha rgyud* tantras and the monastic discipline. In this connection Sog-zlog-pa remarks that in the time of Zhi-ba-'od there was a quarrel between the adepts of the *pha rgyud* and *ma rgyud* tantras.[73] If we accept the statement of *BA* that dMar-po came to Tibet sometime prior to the arrival of Atīśa in 1042, and if the making of translations of the *ma rgyud* tantras in question also took place before or immediately after Atīśa's arrival, we can then be sure that the *bka' shog* was issued in 1092.

69. Bu-ston gives these names among the translators who belong approximately to the second half of the eleventh century A.D., *BTChB*, pp. 915-16.
70. *BA*, pp. 1049-50; *cf.* also *BA*, pp 696-97 where G. Roerich gives a story of Acārya Sham-thabs dmar-po.
71. p. 84-2-5.
72. *BTChB*, pp. 898, 1028.
73. *NgD*, p. 472.



## Translation of the *bka' shog*

The *bka' shog* is written by Zhi-ba-'od of the Palace of Pu-hrangs who is learned in all the 'outer and inner tantras',[74] their commentaries, *sādhana* and *maṇḍala*. It is out of compassion that it is sent to those Buddhists of the kingdom of Tibet, who have taken up Vājrayāna, in the year of the water-monkey.

The tantras (mentioned below), their commentaries and *sādhana*, old and new, composed in the guise of the Word of the Buddha and claiming to be of Indian origin, were written by the Tibetans themselves and are as follows:

(I) Outer tantras

1. The two commentaries, short and long,[75] of the ancient *Ngan song sbyong rgyud*;[76] its rite the *rGyan dam pa*, etc. existing in several versions and those which originate in Khams are mostly misleading. If examined carefully they are forged in accordance with the rites of Kriyā tantras.

Inner tantras (i.e. Mahāyoga tantras)

2. The *Māyājālatantras*:
   i. *bCu gsum pa.*
   ii. *bCu dgu pa.*
   iii. *bZhi bcu pa.*
   iv. *brGyad cu pa.*
   v. *Le'u lag, etc.*[77]

74. The rNying-ma-pa tradition knows two categories of their Yoga tantras: *rnal 'byor phyi pa* and *rnal 'byor nang pa*, Klong-chen rab-'byams (1308-1362), *Theg mchog mdzod* (Kalimpong 1965), f. 65b.
75. According to Sog-zlog-pa the commentaries referred to are works of Anandagarbha, therefore of Indian origin, but does not specify them. However, the question of the authenticity of the commentaries of this tantra is also raised by Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan (1147-1216) who gives six different commentaries. Two of these are attributed (*kha 'phangs pa*) to Anandagarbha (*Ngan song sbyong rgyud kyi spyi don*, *SK*, Vol. 4, No. 96, p. 105-2-1). See also *YN*, pp. 516-17.
76. *K* Vol. 5, No. 116.
77. These belong to the group of eight Māyājāla tantras known as *sgyu 'phrul sde brgyad* (*NgD*, p.467) which according to the *bKa' thang zang gling ma* of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma 'od-zer (1124/36-1204) are as follows (*RT*, Vol. 1 (Ka) f. 31b):
   i. *gSang snying* (*K* Vol. 10, No. 455; *NyG* Pha, ff. 1-61, Chapts. 22), mentioned as *rGyud sgyu 'phrul drva ba* or *gSang ba'i snying po* in *PT* 849 (Hackin, 1924: 4-5).
   ii. *sGyu 'phrul bzhi bcu pa* (*NyG* Pha, ff. 317-415, Chapts. 46).
   iii. *sGyu 'phrul bla ma* (*K* Vol. 10, No. 460; *NyG* Pha, ff. 572-638, Chapts. 13).
   iv. *sGyu 'phrul le lag* (*NyG* Pha, ff. 415-549, Chapts. 33).
   v. *sGyu 'phrul brgyad pa* (*NyG* Pha, ff. 549-571, Chapts. 8).

These appear to be syncretic (*'dres ma*).

3. The commentary *sPar bkab* of the *gSang ba snying po.*[78]
4. The commentary of the *sGyu 'phrul brgyad pa.*
5. *Mig bcu drug pa.*
6. *rDo rje las rim*[79] and other rites of all sizes, written by Zur Śākya 'byung-gnas (i.e. Nos. 3-6), etc.
7. The *mDo lnga*[80] which are said to have been composed by rDo-rje dPal- gyi grags-pa.[81]
8. The commentaries of the *mDo lnga* by the Senior[82] and Junior Zur.[83]
9. *'Khor lo gting rdzogs.*[84]
10. *Theg chen sgrol ma.*[85]
11. *rNal 'byor lam rim.*[86]
12. *rNal 'byor mig gi sgron ma,*[87] the basic text and its commentary.

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vi. *lHa mo sgyu 'phrul* (*K* Vol. 10, No. 459; *NyG* Ba, ff. 1-96, Chapts. 13; *PT* 849: *lha mo sgyu 'phrul drva ba*).
vii. *sGyu 'phrul brgyad cu-pa* (*NyG* Pha, ff, 67-317, Chapts. 82).
viii. *'Jam dpal sgyu 'phrul* (*NyG* Ba, ff. 97-118, Chapts. 14: *PT* 849: *'Jam dpal ye shes sems dpa'i gyud sgyu 'phrul dr(v)a ba*).
The one which has 19 chapters (*bcu dgu pa*) in the *bka' shog does* not seem to be in *NyG*. It is proably identical to the number 1 of the group.

78. Sog-zlog-pa states that this commentary is not by Śākya 'byung-gnas (also known as Zur-bo-che, the Senior Zur, early eleventh century) but by sGeg-pa'i rdo-rje (Līlāvajra), *NgD*, p. 468 (*T* Vol. 82, No. 4718).
79. Sog-zlog-pa maintains that these texts (Nos. 3-6) are of Indian origin (*NgD*, p. 468).
80. *NgD*, p. 468:
i. *Kun 'dus rig pa'i do* (*K* Vol. 9, No. 454: *NyG* Na. ff. 1-276).
ii. *Dur khrod khu byug rol ba'i mdo* (*NyG* Da, ff. 538-633).
iii. *mDo dgongs pa 'dus pa* (*K* Vol. 9, No. 452; *NyG* Da, ff. 1-537).
iv. *Ye shes rngam pa klog gi 'khor lo* (*K* Vol. 9, No. 453; *NyG* Na, ff. 276-439).
v. *Sems lung chen mo'i mdo* (*NyG* Ga, ff. 130-163).
For the same criticism, see also *Ch*, p. 279.
81. *NgD*, p. 468: a disciple of gNyags Jñānakumāra and rMa Rin-chen-mchog.
82. See note 80.
83. Sog-zlong-pa does not state whether there are commentaries by these authors or not. The Junior Zur is Shes-rab-grags *alias* Sugata rgya-bo (1014-1074).
84. Sog-zlog-pa does not identify this work (*NgD*, p. 468).
85. Sog-zlog-pa has no comment on this (*NgD*, p. 469).
86. Sog-zlog-pa simply states (*NgD*, p. 469): 'this work seems to be the one by Sangs-rgyas gsang-ba'. He probably meant the *Lam rnam-par bkod-pa* of Buddhaguhya (*T* Vol. 83, No. 4736).
87. Sog-zlog-pa unfortunately has no comment on this important title. I am tempted to identify it with the *bSam gtan mig gi sgron ma* which is ascribed to gNubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes (contemporary of King dPal 'Khor-btsan, late ninth and early tenth centuries A.D.). It was recently published, Leh 1974. It has various titles, among them is *rNal 'byor mig gi bsam gtan* (pp. 2-4).



(Kīlaya tantras)

13. The short and long versions of the *Mya ngan las 'das pa.*[88]
14. *Khu byug rol ba.*
15. *Ki la ya'i tan tra* which is the *bShad rgyud* of *Khu byug rol ba* (No. 14).
16. *dGongs pa lung ston.*
17. *gSang ba gter sbas.*
18. *rDo rje gsal bkod.*
19. *Ki la ya tan tra chung ngu.*
20. *Byi to'i rgyud* (*Vidyottamatantra*).
21. *sTag mo'i kha gdangs.*
22. *Phag mo'i kha gdangs.*
23. *gSang phur kha gdangs.*
24. *'Tshubs nag rol ba.*
25. *Zhe sdang sems su dag pa'i rgyud*
26. *gSang sngags drug gi rgyud.*
27. *'Phros pa man ngag-gi rgyud lnga.*
28. *Chags rgyud.*
29. *gShin rje'i bsnyel.*
30. *rGyud kyi rgyal po drug,*[89] including the *dPal khro bo'i rgyud*, etc., composed by gNubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes.
31. *bDud rtsi bam po brgyad pa,*[90] which is a *sGrub thabs kyi rgyud.*

(Texts on *Sems sde*)

32. *Rig pa'i nyi ma*[91] etc. which are commentaries of the *rDzogs pa chen po nam mkha' che*[92] written by gNubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes.

*gNod sbyin gyi rgyud*

33. *Rog ti.*
34. *lCags phye 'bar ba.*
35. *Nag po'i rgyud dgu.*
36. *Ācārya ma*

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88. *NyG* Sa, ff. 281-383.
89. Texts No. 14 to 30 ae all concerned with *phur pa* (*kīlaya*). None of the titles correspond to the texts in *NyG* Sha, Sa and Ha except No. 25 which is probably the *Zhe sdang yongs su dag pa'i rgyud* (*NyG* Sha, ff. 285-322). The authenticity of the Phur-pa cycle has been a subject of controversy. On *Vidottama* (text No. 20), see Stein, 1978: 427 *et seq*. On *phur pa* in general see Smith, 1970: 7-8 and Article No. 8, pp. 134-36.
90. *K* Vol. 10, p. 167-2-2—p. 167-4-6; *Cf. NyG* La, ff. 178-200. Sog-zlog-pa admits that this work is of Tibetan origin (*bod rtsom*), *NgD*, p. 470.
91. A *rNal 'byor rig pa'i nyi ma* is mentioned in *BA*, p. 137.
92. This is another title for the text No. v of the 18 *sems sde*, see note 97.

37. *'Dra min bong lto ma*,[93] etc. There are innumerable rites of these.

(Works on rDzogs chen)

The thirteen 'Later translations' of Vimalamitra are:

38. *rMad du byung ba* in 43 chapters.
39. *Byang chub kyi sems bde 'byams rin po che.*
40. *lTa ba bal nag*,[94] etc. together with commentaries, synopsis and notes.

The eighteen *sems sde*[95] written by Drang-nga Shag-tshul (Śākya tshul-khrims) at Khro-gangs in Upper Nyang are as follows:

41. *Kun byed rgyal po.*[96]
42. *mDo bcu gsang ba.*[97]

93. In *NgD* (p. 470), there is no comment on these texts (Nos. 33-37) and so they remain unidentified.
94. This text is not known to me. For the 13 *phyi 'gyur* see note 97.
95. According to Sog-zlog-pa (*NgD*, p. 469) the 18 *sems sde* texts are: the 5 'earlier translations (*snga 'gyur*)' of Vairocana and the 13 'later translation (*phyi 'gyur*)' of Vimalamitra. Sog-zlog-pa reproaches Zhi-ba-'od for having included the texts No. 40, 41, and 42 in the group of 18 (*NgD*, p. 470). However, there is a veritable confusion among the rNying-ma-pa sources themselves concerning the group of 18 *sems sde*. They never agree as to which are the *snga 'gyur* and which are the *phyi 'gyur*. According to *VD*, the 18 *sems sde* are as follows (f. 62a):
    i. *Rig pa 'khu byug* (*NyG* ka, f. 419, lines 1-4; all the rest are in the same volume of *NyG* Ka).
    ii. *brTsal chen sprugs pa* (ff. 423-24).
    iii. *Thig le drug pa.*
    iv. *Khyung chen lding ba* (ff. 419-23).
    v. *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan* (ff. 424-30).
    vi. *Yid bzhin nor bu.*
    vii. *rJe btsun dam pa* (ff. 442-43).
    viii. *Yid spyod rgyal po.*
    ix. *Rin chen kun 'dus* (ff. 443-45).
    x. *bDe 'byams* (ff. 430-32).
    xi. *Srog gi 'khor lo* (ff. 445-48).
    xii. *Nam mkha'i rgyal po* (ff. 461-64).
    xiii. ? (*rDzogs pa spyi gcod*, ff. 455-56).
    xiv. *bDe ba 'phra bkod* (ff. 453-55).
    xv. *sPyi chings.*
    xvi. *rDo la gser zhun* (ff. 499-508).
    xvii. *rTse mo byung rgyal* (ff. 432.42).
    xviii. *rMad du byung ba* (*NyG* Ga, ff. 2-33).

    Of these Nos. i, ii, v, xii and *sKu la 'jug pa* are the 5 *snga 'gyur* of Vairocana (*NgD*, p. 470). For further comments on these texts, see Karmay, 1988: 23-24.
96. *K* Vol. 9, No. 451; *NyG* Ka, ff. 1-220. On this text, see Article No. 5, pp. 69-71.
97. This is the *Chos thams cad rdzogs pa chen po byang chub kyi sems su 'dus pa'i mdo*, *NyG* Ka, ff. 220-343.



43. *Ye shes gsang ba*,[98] etc. together wth commentaries, synopsis and precepts on *abhiṣeka*, meditation and mind.

(Texts on *ma mo* spirits)

44. *Srid pa rgyud lung.*[99]
45. *Ma mo rgyud lung*, etc.[100]

(Texts on *rgyal po* spirits)

46. *rGyal po'i chos lnga*[101] comprising of tantras, commentaries, precepts and rites.

(II) The recent tantras, their commentaries, precepts and *sādhana*

47. *Phyag rgya chen po thig le'i rgyud.*[102]
48. *gSang chen thig le.*[103]
49. *Ye shes snying po'i rgyud.*[104]
50. *Char yang rnam gsum.*[105]
51. *Rin chen snye ma.*[106]
52. *Rin chen thigs pa.*[107]
53. *dBang gi man ngag*,[108] all written by the *ācārya* dMar-po.
54. The precepts of *dBang rin chen 'khor lo*[109] which is said to have been composed by the king Indrabhūti.[110]
55. *sGron gsal*[111] *gyi ' tik ka bha ba ma.*
56. *Rim lnga'i 'grel ba* [112] which is said to have been composed by Klu'i byang-chub.

98. *NyG* Nga, ff. 1-24.
99. *NyG* A, ff. 163-93.
100. *NyG* A, ff. 125-61. Sog-zlog-pa admits that this work is of Tibetan origin (*bod rtsom*).
101. According to Sog-zlog-pa (*NgD*, p. 471), these are the 5 *snga 'gyur* of Vairocana, see note 101.This is very doubtful. The previous group of texts (44, 45) are on the *ma mo* spirits and so 46 may well be concerned with the *rgyal po* spirits.
102. *K* Vol. 1, No. 12. In the passage of the *bka' shog* quoted by rGyang-ro Byang-chub-'bum (*LShDT*, p. 568), text no. 48 is followed by the *Ye shes thig le'i rgyud* (*K* Vol. 1, No. 4) which is missing in our copy of the *bka' shog*.
103. This does not seem to be in *K*.
104. *K* Vol. 1, No. 13.
105. *T* Vol. 57, No. 2463.
106. dBang rin chen snang ba, *T* Vol. 57, No. 2465 (?).
107. *T* Vol. 57, No. 2464. Sog-zlog-pa states (*NgD*, p. 471) that he has seen neither this text nor texts Nos. 49 and 50.
108. *T* Vol. 57, No. 2470.
109. *T* Vol. 69, No. 3300.
110. Bu-ston also mentions a similar title, *YN*, p. 505.
111. This is the well-known commentary of the *Guhyasamāja* (*T* Vol. 60, No. 2650), but the text in question is not known to me. Sog-zlog-pa passes in silence (*NgD*, p. 471).
112. Sog-zlog-pa has no comment (*NgD*, pp. 470-71).

57. *Kun rig rtsa ba'i dkyil 'khor cho ga gsar ma le'u nyi shu rtsa bzhi pa'i 'grel ba,*[113] its instruction and *sādhana.*
58. *Srog 'byung nam mkha'i rgyud,*[114] its commentary and *bshad rgyud.* These texts on *Sems phyogs* are said to have originated in Oḍḍiyāna, but were composed (in Tibet).
59. *Phyag na rdo rje gos sngon can gyi rgyud*, translated by Glang dPal-gyi yeshes.[115] Its commentary, etc.

(Works on Mahāmudrā)

60. *Rin chen phreng ba*[116] by the *paṇḍita* Maitreya.
61. *Phyag rgya bzhi ba*[117] attributed to Nāgārjuna.
62. *Phyag rgya lnga pa.*
63. *dBang rnam par nges pa.*
64. *Phyag rgya bzhi ba'i man ngag.*
65. *Sems 'dzin.*[118]
66. *rNal 'byor ma'i byin rlabs.*[119]
67. *rDo rje phag mo'i byin rlabs*[120] and their *sādhana.* As these (i.e. Nos. 60-67) are influenced by heretical views, they are unsuitable for practice.
68. Further, *Man ngag gser phreng*[121] which vitiates the songs of Dohākoṣā[122] and those of Śrīsiṃha of Nepal.[123]

113. Sog-zlog-pa has no comment (*NgD*, pp. 470-71), but *cf. YN*, p. 467.
114. *NyG* Kha.
115. Sog-zlog-pa as usual has not identified the tantra. Could it be *K* Vol. 4, No. 90?.
116. *T* Vol. 67, No. 2913?.
117. *T* Vol. 68, No. 3069. *Cf.* also *YN*, p. 493.
118. Sog-zlog-pa (*NgD*, p. 472) has no comment on these texts (Nos. 62-65) and so they remain unidentified.
119. According to Sog-zlog-pa this was composed by Virūpu (*NgD*, p. 472), but *T* contains no work with this title ascribed to Virūpa.
120. According to Sog-zlog-pa this was composed by Nāropa (*NgD*, p. 472). There are in fact two *Vajrayoginīsādhana* by Nāropa (*T* Vol. 82, Nos. 4668, 4675). Sa-paṇ Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan, however, is critical of the *bKa'-brgyud-pa* practice of the *rDo rje phag mo'i byin rlabs* (*DR*, p. 305-3-3). The central point of the argument is that *byin rlabs* (*adhiṣṭhāna*) must be preceded by *dbang* (*abhiṣeka*) when initiating a new pupil into the practice of the *Nāro chos drug* according to Sa-paṇ. *Cf.* Go-ram-pa bSod-nams Seng-ge (1429-1489), *sDom pa gsum gyi bstan bcos la 'dris shing rtsad pa'i lan sdom gsum 'khrul spong, SK* Vol. 14, No. 57, p. 259-2, 3; Śākya mchog-ldan (1428-1507), *STh*, pp. 1016. For an account of the bestowing of the *adhiṣṭhāna* of Vajravarahī of the bKa'-brgyud-pa, see sGam-po-pa bSod-nams rin-chen *alias* Dvags-po lha-rje (1079-1153), *Phag mo'i gzhung mdo, Collected Works of Sgam-po-pa Bsod-nams-rin-chen* (Delhi 1975), Vol. II, No. 15 (MA), pp. 61-63.
121. According to Sog-zlog-pa this text is concerned with *sampannakrama* of the Yang-dag cycle of Hūmkara (*NgD*, p. 472).
122. Sog-zlog-pa passes in silence. The word *dohākoṣa* in fact covers a certain number of works contained in *T*. The allusion in the *bka' shog* is therefore very vague. For a



69. *Do rje 'da' ka ma.*[124]
None of these provides perfect means, and since they do not help in attaining Buddhahood, no one should take them as a path or even resort to them. Those who have taken vows as monks must observe their monastic rules, and (when) they take up the practice of Mantrayāna they should make efforts to observe the vows of the tantras belonging to the class of Kriyā, Upayā, Yoga and even the *Guhyasamāja*, etc. without breaking their monastic vows.
Although the tantras belonging to the group of the *ma rgyud* tantras are excellent, they nevertheless cause many monks to break their monastic vows as a result of not knowing the implications of certain terminology. Because of this, there is nothing wrong even if they are not practised at all.
In particular, the theories of the Great Perfection are mixed up with those of the Hindu doctrines. So if one practises these, one will be led into evil rebirths. Since they thus obstruct one from attaining Enlightenment, under no circumstances are they suitable for practice.[125]

(III) The *mantra* and syllables created by the Tibetans

70. *Phyag na rdo rje'i sgrub thabs.* Although the author of this has used the *mantra* of Acala, he calls it as such.[126]
71. *bCom ldan 'das phyag na rdo rje'i sgrub thab.* Although the author of this has used the *mantra* of the *gnod sbyin* Lag-na rdo-rje, he calls it as such.[127]
72. The six *sGron ma*[128] by gNyan *ācārya* dPal-dbyangs with their accessories.

English translation of one of the songs attributed to Saraha (*T* Vol. 69, No. 3110), see Guenther, 1969: 63-71.

123. *Cf.* Article No.5, pp. 70-71
124. According to Sog-zlong-pa this is a subsidiary text of the *Man ngag lta ba'i 'phreng ba* (*T* Vol. 83, No. 4726). *Cf.* Karmay, 1988a: 137-74.
125. Zhi-ba-'od held that the doctrine of rDzogs chen was similar to that of the 'substance-view' (*rtag pa'i lta ba*), *NgD*, p. 465.
126. Sog-zlog-pa has no comment on this text.
127. According to Sog-zlog-pa this originates from the Kashmiri *paṇḍita* Śākyaśrī (1204-1213). Sog-zlog-pa therefore seems to be unaware of the chronological problem.
128. This certainly refers to the six works which are found under the name of gNyan dPal-dbyangs (*T* Vol. 150, Nos. 5918-23). For a résumé of the contents of these texts, see Tucci, 1958: Part II, pp. 143-4; Karmay, 1988a: 65-69. However, Sog-zlog-pa states as follows (*NgD*, p. 474): *sgron ma rnam drug yang/ gdams ngag dad skyed sgron ma la sogs pa'i sdebs de rnams yin na ni/ mdzad pa po slob dpon padma 'byung gnas yin/* 'If the group of *gDams ngag dad skyed sgron ma*, etc., is meant by the 'Six sGron-ma', the author of these is the teacher Padma 'byung-gnas'.This group of *man ngag* Sog-zlog-pa refers to is not known to me.

As there are also too many *sādhana* produced by the Tibetans, one can hardly accept them. They may be the path leading into evil births, hence *samsāra*. Those who follow the religious tradition known as bKa'-gdams-pa must not practise these false doctrines.

Sent to the Tibetan Buddhists by Zhi-ba-'od of the Palace.

**The Tibetan text of the *bka' shog***

Om svastisiddham/ pu hrangs kyi pho brang zhi ba 'od/ gsang sngags phyi nang gi rgyud dang/ 'grel ba dang/ sgrub thabs dang/ dkyil 'khor cho ga mtha' dag la mkhas pa'i zhal snga nas mdzad te/ bod kyi rgyal khams kyi bstan pa la gnas shing/ rdo rje theg pa la zhugs pa rnams la brtse bar dgongs nas/ chu pho spre'u lo la bka' shog brdzangs pa/

sangs rgyas kyi bka' ltar bcos pa'i rgyud dang/ 'grel pa dang/ sgrub thabs snga phyi bod du/ rgya gar ma'i ming btags shing bod kyis byas pa ni 'di dag ste/

sngar gyi dus kyi phyi rgyud kyi ngan song sbyong rgyud kyi 'grel ba che chung ngam/ rgyan dam pa la sogs pa cho ga che phran mang du yod pa rnams dang/ khams nas byung ba rnams la ma nor ba cher med/ de'ang 'di dang mthun par dpyad na/ kri ya'i cho ga rnams dang/ 'grel ba ltar bcos pa'i bsnyel rnams dang/

nang pa la/ sgyu 'phrul gyi rgyud la bcu gsum pa dang/ bcu dgu pa dag/ bzhi bcu pa dang/ brgyad cu pa dang/ le'u lag la sogs pa rnams ni 'dres mar snang/ zur shakya 'byung gnas la sogs pas byas pa'i gsang ba shying po'i 'grel ba spar bkab dang/ sgyu 'phrul brgad cu pa'i 'grel ba rnams dang/ mig bcu drug pa la sogs pa'i 'grel ba rnams dang/ rdo rje las rim la sogs pa'i sgrub thabs dang/ cho ga che phran rnams dang/ dar rje dpal gyi grags pas byas zer ba'i mdo lnga ma la zur che chung gis[1] byas pa'i 'grel ba rnams dang/ 'khorl lo gting[2] rdzogs dang/ theg chen sgrol ma dang/ rnal 'byor lam rim dang/ rnal 'byor mig gi sgron ma la sogs pa'i sgrub thabs rtsa 'grel rnams dang/ mya ngan las 'das pa che chung la sogs pa dang/ phur pa'i rgyud la khu byug rol pa dang/ de'i bshad rgyud ki la ya'i tantra dang/ dgongs pa lung ston dang/ gsang ba gter sbas dang/ rdo rje gsal bkod dang/ ki la ya tantra chung ngu dang/ byi to'i rgyud du gsol ba dang/ stag mo kha gdangs[3] dang/ phag mo kha gdangs[4] dang/ gsang phur kha gdangs[5] dang/ 'tshubs[6] nag rol pa dang/ zhe sdang sems su dag pa'i rgyud dang/ gsang sngags drug gi rgyud dang/ 'grel ba dang/ cho gar bcas pa dang/ 'phros pa[7]man ngag gi rgyud lnga zer te/ chags rgyud dang/ gshin rje'i bsnyel rnams dang/

gzhan yang gnubs[8] sangs rgyas ye shes rin po ches byas pa'i dpal 'bar khro bo'i rgyud la sogs pa rgyud kyi rgyal po drug dang/ bdud rtsi



bam po brgyad pa la sogs pa sgrub thabs kyi rgyud dang/ sgrub thabs dang bcas pa rnams dang/ yang gnubs[9] sangs rgyas ye shes rin po ches byas pa'i rdzogs pa chen po nam mkha' che'i 'grel ba rig pa'i nyi ma la sogs pa man ngag tu gsol ba dang/

gnod sbyin gyi rgyud rog ti dang/ lcags phye 'bar ba dang/ nag po'i rgyud dgu dang/

a tsa rya ma dang/ 'dra min[10] bong lto ma la sogs pa cho ga dpag tu med pa dang/

bi ma mi tras bsgyur ba'i sems phyogs kyi phyi[11] 'gyur bcu gsum la/ rmad du byung ba'i le'u bzhi bcu zhe gsum dang/ byang chub sems bde 'byams rin po che dang/ lta ba bal nag la sogs pa'i 'grel ba dang/ sa bcad dang/ yig chung dang bcas pa dang/

nyang stod khro gangs su drang nga shag tshul gyis byas pa'i sems sde[12] bco brgyad kyi rgyud rnams la/ kun byed rgyal po dang/ mdo bcu gsang ba dang/ ye shes gsang ba dang/ 'grel ba dang sa bcad dang/ dbang bskur gyi man ngag dang/ sgom pa'i man ngag dang/ sems nyams kyi man ngag dang/

srid pa rgyud lung la sogs pa dang/ ma mo'i rgyud lung la sogs pa ma mo'i chos thams cad dang/

gzhan yang rgyal po'i chos lnga la sogs te/ rgyud dang/ 'grel ba dang/ man ngag dang/ cho gar ming btags[13] pa dpag tu med do/

phyis gsar du byung ba'i rgyud dang/ 'grel ba dang/ man ngag dang/ sgrub thabs la/ a tsa rya dmar pos byas pa'i phyag rgya chen po thig le dang/ gsang chen thig le dang ye shes snying po'i rgyud dang/ de dag gi 'grel ba dang/ char yang rnam gsum dang rin chen snye ma dang/ rin chen thig pa dang/ dbang gi man ngag la sogs pa dang/ sgrub thabs mang po dang/

dbang rin chen 'khor lo la sogs pa'i man ngag rgyal po intra bhu tis mdzad zer ba dang/ sgron gsal gyi tikka bha va ma dang/

rim lnga'i 'grel ba klu'i byang chub kyis mdzad zer ba dang/ kun rig rtsa ba'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga gsar ma le'u nyi shu rtsa bzhi pa'i 'grel ba dang/ man ngag dang/ de'i sgrub thabs dang bcas pa dang/

o rgyan gyi yul nas sems phyogs kyi chos byung zer te/ byas pa srog 'byung nam mkha'i rgyud 'grel ba dang bcas pa dang/ de'i bshad rgyud dang/

glang dpal gyi[14] ye shes kyis[15] bsgyur ba'i phyag na rdo rje gos sngon can gyi rgyud dang/ 'grel ba dang/ sgrub thabs dang/ sbyin sreg[16] gi cho ga dang/ sgrub thabs bha va ma che chung la sogs pa dpag tu med pa dang/

pandita mai tri pa'i chos la/ rin po che' phreng ba dang/

na ga dzu nas mdzad zer ba'i phyag rgya bzhi pa dang/ phyag rgya lnga pa dang/ dbang rnam par nges pa rtsa 'grel dang bcas pa dang/ phyag

rgya bzhi pa'i man ngag dang/ sems 'dzin rnams dang/ rnal 'byor ma'i byin rlabs dang/ rdo rje phag mo'i byin rlabs dang sgrub thabs mu stegs pa dang bsres nas snang bas byar mi rung ngo/

gzhan yang man nag gser phreng la sogs pa do ha ko ṣa'i glu la bslad pa dang/ bal po śrī sing ha'i glu a bslad pa la sogs pa dang/ rdo rje mda' ka ma dang/

'di rnams gang yang/ yang dag pa'i lam ma yin zhing/ bla na med pa'i byang chub thob par mi 'gyur bas/ skyabs gnas dang lam du sus kyang byar mi rung ngo/ rab tu byung ba rnams kyis kyang 'dul ba ltar bsrung zhing/ bka'i gsang sngags la zhugs pa rnams kyis kyang 'dul ba la brten pa dang mi 'gal bar/ kri ya dang/ upaya[17] dang/ yo ga dang/ gsang ba 'dus pa la sogs pa'i bar la/ dam tshig ma nyams par byas la 'bad do/

shes rab kyi rgyud ni mchog tu gyur pa yin yang/ dgongs pa can gyi tshig don ma shes nas/ rab tu byung ba bslab pa dang phral ba mang bas ma byas kyang 'gal ba med pa tsam/

kyad par du rdzogs pa chen po'i lta ba mu stegs kyi rim pa dang bsres pas/ 'di byas na ngan song gi lam du 'gro bar 'gyur zhing/ bla na med pa'i byang chub la gegs byed pas rnam pa thams cad du byar mi rung ngo/

bod kyis byas pa'i sngags dang yi ge la/ mi g.yo ba'i sngags la brten nas phyag na rdo rje sgrub thabs yin zer ba dang/ gnod sbyin lag na rdo rje'i[18] sngags la brten nas/ bcom ldan 'das phyag na rdo rje'i sgrub thabs dang man ngag yin zer ba dang/ gnyan a tsarya dpal dbyangs kyis byas pa'i sgron ma rnam drug dang/ gtor ma dang/ 'phrin las dang/ man ngag tu byas pa dang/ gzhan yang bod kyis byas pa'i sgrub thabs mang du yod pas blo btad du mi btub/ 'khor ba ngan song gi lam yin no/ bka' gdams kyi chos rgyud du grags pa 'di rnams kyis/[19] chos log 'di rnams nyams su mi blang ngo/

Pho brang zhi ba 'od kyis bod kyi chos pa rnams la brdzangs pa'o//

1 gyi. 2 sting. 3 bsdangs. 4 bsdangs. 5 bsdangs. 6 tshub. 7 pas. 8 snubs. 9 snubs. 10 man. 11 phyis. 12 bde. 13 btabs. 14 missing. 15 kyi. 16 sregs. 17 upa. 18 re. 19 kyi.



# The Decree of the Khro-chen King

During my research mission to Amdo under the auspices of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, in June 1995. I made a short visit to rGyal-rong.[1] The main interest in this place has been in connection with my studies on rDzogs chen.[2] rGyal-rong is often said to be the place where Vairocana was exiled.

However, little has now remained of what was once a formidable region of Tibetan culture with its many solidly built and high hexagonal or octagonal stone towers and great stone and wooden square palaces. The Chinese Cultural Revolution has done its job. Only ruins of palaces and temples are there to be seen now.

Little is really known of this part of Tibet. Yet it was a fairly prosperous region with a fervently religious population, the predominant faith being the Bon religion. The precise date of the Buddhist penetration is not known, but it would seem relatively recent. The struggle for religious supremacy between the two faiths, Bon and Buddhism began only about the fifteenth century when the dGe-lugs-pa began to appear on the scene.

There are only a few scattered references to rGyal-rong among the Tibetan written sources. In his biography of lCang-skya Rol-pa'i rdo-rje (1717-1786), Thu'u-bkvan Blo-bzang chos-kyi nyi-ma (1737-1802) relates how the Manchu army attacked the kingdom of Rab-brtan supported by a magic ritual performed by lCang-skya.[3] The short and rather sketchy account of the dGe-lugs-pas' missionary work and the Manchu military expedition given in the *Deb ther rgya mtsho*[4] by Brag-dgon bsTan-pa rab-rgyas (b.1801) seems to be the only written Buddhist source that is available to scholars.

Among the Bonpo sources, a *Khro chen rgyal rabs* entitled *Shel dkar phreng ba* is known to have existed and is referred to in the *Par gyi dkar chag srid pa'i sgron me* by Kun-grol grags-pa 'ja'-tshon snying-po-can (b.1700) who wrote the *dkar chag* in 1766. The main topic of this

1. Jinchuan in Chinese, see Stein, 1959: 2.
2. Karmay, 1988a.
3. *Khyab bdag rdo rje sems dpa'i ngo bo dpal ldan bla ma dam pa ye shes bstan pa'i sgron me dpal bzong po'i rnam par thar pa mdo tsam brjod pa dge ldan bstan pa'i mdzes rgyan,* Gedan sungrab minyam gyunphel Series, Vol. I, New New Delhi 1969, pp. 58-611. *Cf.* Smith, 1969: 10.
4. *Yul mdo smad kyi ljongs su thub bstan rin po che ji ltar dar ba'i tshul gsal bar brjod pa deb ther rgya mtsho* (also known as *Amdo or mDo smad chos 'byung*), Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982, pp. 771-80.

*dkar chag* is about the carving of wood-blocks of the Bonpo version of *Prajñāpāramitā* known as *Khams chen* in sixteen volumes which was undertaken by the king of Khro-chen, Kun-dga' nor-bu and his queen Tshe-dbang lha-mo in 1766. This *dkar chag* is to be found at the end of volume A of the *Khams chen* (f. 521a-541a). Its fourth section is devoted to the genealogy of the Khro-chen Royal House *(khro chen gdung rabs)* in Khro-skyabs. The same *dkar chag* is reproduced at the end of volume A of the Chu-chen edition (f. 364a-383a), but the fourth section of this edition of the *dkar chag* contains the genealogy of the Rab-brtan Royal House (*rab brtan gdung rabs*) in Chu-chen instead of the genealogy of the Khro-chen Royal House. The Chu-chen edition of the *Khams chen* was undertaken by the Rab-brtan king, Nam-mkha' rgyal-po in 1764.

The *dkar chag* therefore contains a fair amount of information concerning the genealogy of the two royal houses and a short chronological section. Using this text and other materials which I have gathered recently I intend to publish a general book on rGyal-rong in the near future.

rGyal-rong - also written as rGya-rong because of the phrase *shar phyogs rgyal mo rgya yi rong/* - is situated between Dar-rtse-mdo in the south and the Shar-khog (or Zong-chu) region in Amdo in the northeast. The river rGyal-mo dngul-chu flows through its main narrow valley from north beginning in the Tsha-kho area towards southeast. rGyal-rong produced a number of great Bonpo and Buddhist writers on religion. The region is said to have been divided into a number of principalities, usually eighteen, each stylising itself as an independent state.[5] Among these, bTsan-la, Rab-brtan in Chu-chen and Khro-chen in Khro-skyabs are particularly famous for their successful resistance against the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century.[6] Their opposition to the communist onslaught has become legendary.

When the Manchus came with the moral support of the dGe-lugs-pa, bTsan-la and Rab-brtan in Chu-chen finally fell in 1775 after some twelve years of fighting. The famous Bonpo monastery in Chu-chen known as g.Yung-drung lha-sding was sacked and then transformed into a dGe-lugs-pa monastery.[7] However, Khro-skyabs still resisted and so remained intact till the 1960s.

In the early eighteenth century, Sangs-rgyas gling-pa (b. 1705) and his illustrious disciple Kun-grol grags-pa flourished in rGyal-rong. They were the *dbu bla,* royal preceptors of the kings of bTsan-la, Rab-brtan and Khro-chen. When the king Kun-dga' nor-bu of Khro-chen completed his manuscript copy of the Bonpo Canon, he and the king Nam-mkha' rgyal-po of Rab-brtan requested Kun-grol grags-pa to compile a catalogue, which he did. It is entitled *Nyi ma 'bum gyi 'od zer.* It has thirteen chapters and was completed in 1751 in the palace of Rab-brtan, Li-ver rnam-par rgyal-ba'i rdzong-chen.[8] Kun-grol then supervised the xylographic editions of the Bonpo Canon in both Rab-brtan and Khro-chen Royal Houses.

## The *bka' shog*

The main focus in this article is the *bka' shog*[9] of the Khro-chen king sKal-bzang rgyal-mtshan. It was issued to the lama bsTan-'dzin rgyal-mtshan (d. 1984 aged 79, hence 1906-1984) of Bya-'phur some time in the 1940s. bsTan-'dzin rgyal-mtshan was one of the hereditary lamas of the Bonpo monastery sNang-zhig-dgon in rNga-khog (Aba autonomous prefecture on Chinese maps) in Amdo. The form of the *bka' shog,* which is reproduced in this article, is interesting in that its presentation does not resemble other forms of *bka' shog* which are invariably written ones. The present *bka' shog* is printed on yellowish cotton. It is decorated with the *'phur ma* decoration in silk on the top part, lotus petals painted on the bottom part, and with blue borders on either side. It is intended for displaying like a *thangka* painting (Fig. 1).



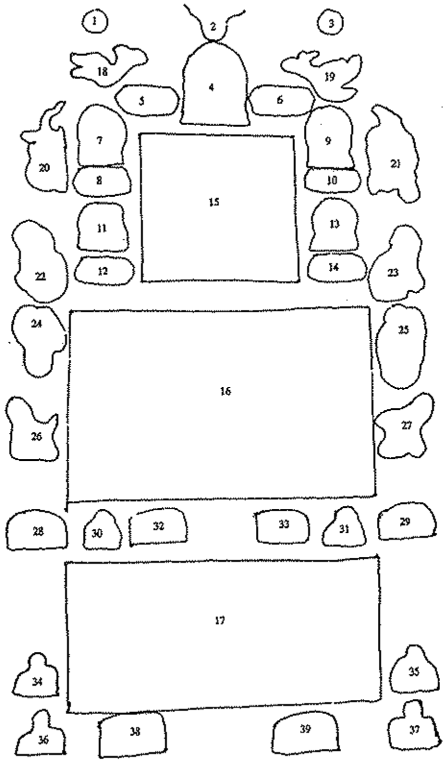
*Plate 2: The bka' shog (SGK 1985)*

5. *Cf.* Wylie, 1962: 102-3.
6. *Cf. Deb ther rgya mtsho,* p. 777.
7. *Ibid.,* p. 777.

8. *Zab dang rgya che g.yung drung bon gyi bka' 'gyur gyi dkar chag nyi ma 'bum gyi 'od zer,* manuscript, f. 197a (Now published under the title: *g.Yung drung bon gyi bka' 'gyur dkar chag,* Krung go bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, Beijing, 1993, p. 258).
9. For other types of *bka' shog,* see Article Nos. 1 and 2.

It consists of three main parts (Fig. 2, Key to Fig. 1) The top square[10] contains what is known as *sgra 'khor*[11] which resembles, in form, the Western cross-word puzzle. It has thirty-four poetic verses, each having nine syllables. The main structural line is *gtso mchog thugs sprul rab brtan snang srid rgyal*, "Victory over the world, Rab-brtan, the spiritual emanation of gTso-mchog".[12] This line can be read either forwards or backwards, and also read either from the central key syllable *gtso* of the square towards the four cardinal and four intermediate directions or *vice-versa*. All the other lines read from left to right. The 9th syllable of the preceding line is used as the beginning of the next line. They cover more or less the same subject as the inscription contained in the central square.[13]

The inscriptions contained in the bottom and central squares are translated and transliterated below. The one contained in the central square relates mainly the mythical origin of the Rab-brtan Royal House. It appears that bTsan-la, Rab-brtan and Khro-chen had common divine ancestors. This part then leads on to the royal genealogy, but not all the names in the genealogy are given. Here the king of Rab-brtan, bSod-nams dbang-gi rgyal-po states that his father Nam-mha' rgyal-po was the twenty-fourth king in his family. This passage is followed by short references



*Key to the details of the bka' shog shown in*

10. See Key No. 15.
11. See Key No. 15.
12. See Key Nos. 9-10, 16 (transliterated text of the inscription, 1.66).
13. See Key No. 16.



to his own activities and the geographical position of his kingdom. The text then ends by stating that for whatever purpose the *bka' shog* is granted, all the subjects of the kingdom, without exception, must obey it.

The bottom square is left with a blank space to be filled out, indicating when and for what purpose the *bka' shog* is issued. In the case of the present *bka' shog,* the square therefore contains a handwritten inscription stating for whom and for what reason it was issued.

One of the obscure parts of the history of the *bka' shog* is the question of when the carving of the wood-block was made. We know that the present copy of the *bka' shog* was issued by the king sKal-bzang rgyal-mtshan of Khro-chen to Bya-'phur bsTan-'dzin rgyal-mtshan as we have mentioned above. In the central square, a blank space is also left for filling in the name of the reigning king and in the present copy, the name Khro-chen sKal-bzang rgyal-mtshan is written by hand.

However, reading through the historical account given in the central square, we know that the inscription of this part of the *bka' shog* is written in the first person and it is written in the name of bSod-nams dbang-gi rgyal-po,[14] the twenty-fifth king of the Rab-brtan Royal House. His father Nam-mkha' rgyal-po is famous for undertaking the carvings of wood-blocks and was a devotee of Kun-grol grags-pa. We can therefore deduce that the king bSod-nams dbang-rgyal lived around the second half of the eighteenth century and that he must have had the *bka' shog* designed and carved before the fall of his kingdom to the Manchu army and the dGe-lugs-pa which took place in 1775.



*Plate 3: The inscription in the central square (see Key no. 16)*

14. This is further confirmed by the four verses which are to be found on the top part of the *bka' shog*, see Key No. 6.

However, it is not known how and when the carved block of the *bka' shog* was passed into the hands of the Khro-chen kings who used it as if it were theirs despite the fact that it contains only the royal genealogy of the Rab-brtan Royal House and was first written in the name of the Rab-brtan king, bSod-nams dbang-rgyal.

The Royal Houses of bTsan-la, Rab-brtan and Khro-chen were closely related through their common divine ancestors, and I presume later by marriage, but this would hardly justify the use of the woodblock by the Khro-chen Royal House. This part of the history of the *bka' shog* therefore remains unexplained for the present. However, in the inscription contained in the bottom square,[15] mention is made of four royal houses and it is stated that the present *bka' shog* is issued with the unanimous agreement of the four royal houses. They are probably bTsan-la, Rab-brtan, dGe-bshes-tsa and Khro-chen. However, there is a certain amount of confusion in Tibetan sources concerning the orthography of this last name. We find spellings like *khro skyabs, khro bcu* and *khro chen.* This name is related to the word *khro bo,* an epithet of the Bonpo tantric divinity known as gTso-mchog mkha'-'gying. This divinity as we have noted in connection with the *sgra 'khor* and the inscriptions in the central and bottom squares above is considered as the divine ancestor of the kings of bTsan-la, Rab-brtan and Khro-chen. While Khro-skyabs designates a large area, Khro-chen is applied specifically to the place where the palace of the Khro-chen kings, Drug-zur rnam-rgyal-rdzong was situated and is particularly used as the name of the royal house.

### Translation of the inscription contained in the central square

(Fig. 3; see Fig. 2, Key No. 16)
Salutations to gShen-rab, the victorious, god of gods,
The divinity mThar-thug who is the essence of the Great Four[16] and the Five Perfect Ones.[17]
gTso-mchog, the embodiment of all wrathful manifestations of wisdom,[18]
And the defenders of the Word of the Enlightened One.[19]
(This *bka' shog*) is adorned with the six ornaments,[20] the four glorious ones,[21] the garuḍa.[22]
The Shang-shang,[23] the Sha-ra (kṛṣṇasāra),[24] the elephants,[25] the tigers,[26] the yaks,[27]
And the athletes.[28]
Emaho! You, All Knowing, through your compassion,
Survey closely the multitude of existence.
Protect those who observe the royal laws.
Through your manifestation, may the royal laws be strict!
A ray of light radiated from the heart of gTso-mchog mkha'-'gying,
Residing in the majestic divine palace in heaven,
On to the heads of the king and queen of Rab-brtan,
So the prince Rus-sbal dung-rna was born.[29]
He grasped the significance of the two kinds of Law without learning.
He was able to overpower the three kinds of worlds and the three kinds of existence.
Like a *cakravartin,*
He established his own royal lineage,
Which remained in force in this good age.
In the first age, there came Ye-smon rgyal-po,[30]
In the second age, the Phyva, the dMu and the gTsug,[31]
In the third age, the clans sGo and lDong.[32]
Kings, ministers and the subject came into existence as pure, medium and impure (as three strata of the society).
Such is the evolution of people in this world.
The six original royal lines are:
dMu, Shag, Hos, dPo, rGya and gNyan.
They represent the Five Great gSas and mKha'-'gying,[33]

15. See Key No. 17.
16. These are: *lta ba,* 'theory', *spyod pa,* 'practice'; *sgom pa,* 'reflection', and *'bras bu,* 'conclusion'. They signify four stages in the teaching of the Bonpo Ma-rgyud cycle. *Cf.* Key Nos. 7-8.
17. For a short discussion on these divinites, one may see, Karmay, 1972: n. 2.
18. See Key Nos. 9-10.
19. Key Nos. 11-14.
20. Key Nos. 18-29.



21. Key Nos. 34-37.
22. Key No. 2.
23. Key Nos. 24-25.
24. Key Nos. 26-27.
25. Key Nos. 28-29.
26. Key Nos. 38-39.
27. Key Nos. 32.33.
28. Key Nos. 30-31.
29. It is to be noted that this king here is considered as the first ancestor of the Rab-brtan Royal House although in the *dkar chag* of the Chu-chen edition, this name appears as the twentieth king of Rab-brtan.
30. The creator of the world in the Bonpo cosmogony, *cf,* Article No. 17 pp. 65-66.
31. *Cf. ibid,* pp. 250-55.
32. On these clans, see Stein, 1959: 41, 70; Article No. 17, pp. 272-73.
33. The five gSas are: gShen-lha, Gar-gsas, gNam-gsas, gSas-rje and rGod-gsas. To this group, mKha'-'gying is added, six divinities in all. The six royal lines correspond to these six divinities in the following way: dMu, gShen-lha; Shag, Gar-gsas; Hos, gNam-gsas; dPo, gSas-rje; rGya, rGod-gsas and gNyan, mKha'-'gying (*NyZG,* f. 40b).

And are spiritual emanations of the divinity Khri-shes dkar-po.[34]
As for my own royal lineage,
It originates in the divinity mKha'-'gying and the clan gNyan.
The first king was Srid-pa Ye-'bum dkar-po.[35]
He first descended on the summit of Mt dMu-ri smug-po.
Then on the summit of Mt rMa-gnyan sPom-ra,
And then on the summit of Mt mKha'-'gying.
From this ancestor bTsan-la Ye-'bum dkar-po,
To bDag-chen lha-bsnyo,[36]
Twenty-five generations passed.
I, the king of Rab-brtan, ascended the throne of Rus-sbal dung-rna.
Counting from the successor of Rus-sbal dung-rna,
Up till the esteemed Nam-mkha' rgyal-po,
The twenty-fourth king of Rab-brtan,[37]
Our royal lineage continued like the beads of a crystal rosary.
I am (the twenty-fifth king) called bSod-nams dbang-gi rgyal-po.
I took in hand the Two Laws with determination,
And made a thorough study of them for three years.
The silk-knot of the Bon Law tightens gently.
The golden yoke of the Royal Law weighs down justly.
Thought and compassion rose in me for all the black-headed people.
This decree is granted for the benefit of all, the mighty and the humble.
It should be correctly understood by the future generations.
If you depend with confidence upon this decree, the royal state will endure.
The present king of Rab-brtan,
His paternal uncle or nephew or the Teacher.[38]
The king sKal-bzang rgyal-mtshan of Khro-chen,
Granted this decree with the impression of his seal on it.
The kingdom (i.e. Rab-brtan) is in rGyal-mo-rong in the east.
It is a country of Bon and has sixteen myrirarchies (i.e. 160,000 family unities).
It stretches to Shar-rong dam-ka-sgo in the east,

34. This divinity is usually designated as the protector of Jambhudvīpa, see *NyZG*, f. 40b (note 33).

35. In the *dkar chag*, this name appears as the third king (f. 375b).

36. This name is not mentioned in the royal genealogy given in the *dkar chag* where the twenty-fifth name is Kha-ti nye-'bum.

37. The successor of Rus-sbal dung-rna is called Mang-mkhar sgom-blo and counting from this named king, as the first, to Nam-mkha' rgyal-po, there are exactly twenty-four names in the genealogy given in the *dkar chag* (f. 375b).

38. The title *slob dpon* in royal families in rGyal-rong was often given to a younger brother of the reigning king who was often a monk. This line of the inscription clearly suggests that the king's paternal uncle, nephew and the Teacher have the same right to issue the *bka' shog* as the king himself. It is here, after this line, a blank space is provided for inserting the name of the reigning king.



Bye-ma 'bum-gling in the south,
Rab-brtan sgang-nag in the west,
And mChod-rten dkar-po in the north.
To all, laymen and monks, the mighty and the humble,
The orders of our ancestors are here proclaimed.
(The kings of) Rab-brtan are victorious over the world and emanations of gTso-mchog.
They are the suppressors of the mighty and protectors of the poor.
Genuine laws are given below in detail, read them.
Those who disobey the law will be punished with death.
(The kings will endeavour) to render happy their close and distant officials.
The following rules are proclaimed to all subjects including:
The lamas and teachers who can fly in the sky,
The learned and the tantrists who can cut stones,
Those who belong to the royal clan, the maternal uncles and cousins,
The monastic and lay communities, powerful dominions,
Heroes and warriors,
Lords, ministers, Buddhists, Bonpos, laymen, monks,
Concerned queens, chaplains, clerks,
Rulers, chiefs, governors, stewards,
Local people and the people from Trol-pa-shong.

**Translation of the inscription contained in the bottom square**

(Fig. 4; see Fig. 2, Key No. 17)
The king of the Khro-chen kingdom,
Belongs to the clan gNyan, issued from the divinity mKha'-'gying.
I, the hereditary king sKal-bzang rgyal-mtshan,
Together with the ministers and the four members of the royal clan,
Granted this sealed decree to bsTan-'dzin rgyal-mtshan of sNang-zhig Bya-'phur,
In token of the deep and continuous faith that existed,
Between the generations of the royal family and the generations of the sNang-zhig Bya-'phur family,
In the form of patron and priest.
The four Royal Houses agreed unanimously,
That they would respect bsTan-'dzin (rgyal-mtshan), the master of the doctrine as the crown jewel of Indra,
And that they would assist him in accomplishing his wishes as he would do the same for the Royal Houses.
The lama of Bya-'phur, bsTan-'dzin (rgyal-mtshan),
Made two copies of the Canon (printed from the wood-blocks).
One copy was for the monastery of sNang-zhig-dgon, bKra-shis g.yung-drung bon-gling,

The other copy was for his family residence, Bya-'phur bKra-shis rnam-rgyal-gling.
He also accomplished other activities:
Particularly he performed the ritual services for the king, ministers and their people,
For day and night during three months,
As he was requested.
At that time, he was issued this sealed decree,
And had been the object of high honour and immeasurable respect.
This (decree) is to witness (his accomplishments and the royal respect that he received).

**The inscriptions contained in the other parts of the *bka' shog***

1. *zla ba,* moon
2. *khyung,* garuḍa
3. *nyi ma,* sun
4. rNam-par rgyal-ba, an aspect of gShen-rab.
5. Eulogy to gShen-rab:
rdzogs sangs rgyas kun rnam par rgyal ba'i skul/ston nasphyin log bdud srin bar chod btul/
ston pa'i rgyal mtshan sku gdung gsung rab brten/
phyag rjes bzhag pa khams gsum yongs la spro/

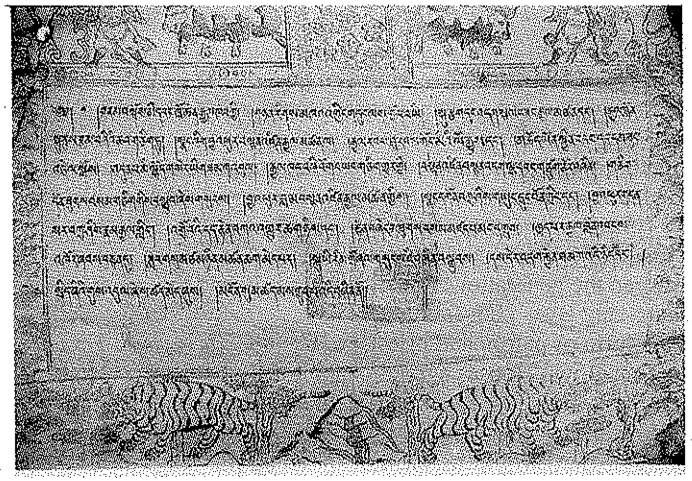


*Plate 4: The inscription in the bottom square (see Key No. 17).*

6. Four verses stating that the *bka' shog* was made under the order of the king of Rab-brtan, bSod-nams dbang-gi rgyal-po. Here is the transliteration of the inscription:



btsan lha'i rgyal rab(s) rab tu brtan pa'i dngos/
rab rgyal bsod nams dbang gi rgyal pos bkod/
kun las rnam par rgyal ba'i skur brten nas/
bon srid 'bral med rgyal rab(s) mthar brtan gsol/

7 mThar-thug, the principal divinity of the Bonpo Ma-rgyud cycle.

8 Eulogy to mThar-thug:
lta sgom spyod 'bras che bzhi mchog lnga'i lha/
theg chen 'khor lo bskor ba'i zhing khams su/
'gro kun byin rlabs stobs kyis 'dren pa dang/
bdud srin mu stegs theg dman zil gnon bzhugs/

9 gTso-mchog, one of the principal divinities of the Bonpo sPyi-spungs cycles.

10 Eulogy to gTso-mchog:
kun bzang kun snang gtso mchog mkha' 'gying lha/
zhi rgyas dbang drag lhun grub phrin las kyis/
'gro don rgya lag phyad par mdzad par rmad/
phyi nang dgra bgegs ma lus gzhom phyir bzhugs/

11 Che-btsan dmag-dpon, a religious protector.

12 Invocation to the above religious protector:
che btsan dmag dpon rgyal po bka' sdod sogs/
bstan 'gro spyi la gnod cing gtses pa yi/
bsgral ba'i zhing bcu la sogs log byed kun/
klad pa zho 'thung srog snying hong len mdzod/

13 bKa'-gsang lha-mo, a religious protectress, an aspect of Srid-pa rgyal-mo.

14. Invocation to the above religious protectress:
srid gsum yongs la brtse ba'i gar bsgyur zhing/
nyes legs ltang gcod bka' gsang lha mo khyed/
lus ngag yid gsum sbyor ba ngan bshom gang/
dri tshor tsam gyis zhal du bstim par mdzod/

15. The *sgra 'khor,* usually composed according to the model of the last part of *Kāvyādarśa,* known as *sgra rgyan.*

16 This square contains the main inscription of the *bka' shog* (for transliteration, see below)

17. The inscription in this square states for whom and why the *bka' shog* was issued (for transliteration, see below)

18, 19 *chu srin,* makara.

20, 21 *g.yu 'brug,* turquoise dragons.

22, 23 *seng ge,* lions.

24, 25 *shang shang,* usually occurs as *shang shang te'u,* a mythical animal.

26, 27 *sha ra,* kṛṣṇasāra, a kind of black spotted antelope.

28, 29 *glang chen,* elephants.

30, 31 *gyad,* athletes.
32, 33 *g.yag,* yaks.
34,35,36,37 *dpal bzhi,* the four *dpal* guardians.
38, 39 *stag,* tigers.

**Transliteration of the inscription contained in the central square of the *bka' shog*** (Fig. 2, Key No. 16)

(Line 1) zhang zhung skad du/
dmu ra ta han spungs so pa ta ya/
dmu ra pe ni ver zhi ku tun hrun/
u ye tha tson ma tra ku tun hrun/
kro ta ver ro mu ye ku tun hrun/

(1.2) *l*ha yi lha mchog gshen rab rnam par rgyal/
che bzhi mchog lnga'i yang bcud mthar thug lha/
ye shes khro tshogs kun 'dus gtso mchog sku/
bka' skyong srungs (srung) ma bcas la gus phyag 'tshal/
rgyan drug dpal (1.3) bzhi nor bu thob pa'i rgyan/
rgyan gzhan shang shang sha ra glang chen rgyan/
rgyan des dpal bskyed stag g.yag rnam bzhi'i rgyan/
rgyan 'os gyad bcas bstod pas don mthun rgyan/
e ma ho/ ji bzad rnam mkhyen (1.4) thugs rje'i tsha zer spyan/
srid pa'i rgya mtshor nye bar rab gzigs nas/
gong gi rgyal khrims bsrung mdzad rtag tu skyob/
rnam sprul stobs kyis rgyal khrims btsan par shog/
'og min mdzes sdug lha yi pho brang nas/
(1.5) gtso mchog mkha' 'gying thugs kyi 'od zer 'phros/
rab brtan rgyal po yab yum spyi bor babs/
sprul pa'i sras mchog rus sbal dung rna 'khrungs/
khrims gnyis ma bslab rang 'byung sems la shar/
khams (1.6) gsum dbang bsdud srid gsum zil gyi (s) gnon/
stong gsum 'khor lo sgyur (bsgyur) ba'i rgyal po ltar/
rang gi rgyal rab(s) rang gis gsal bar bstan/
gnas pa mnyam ldan bskal bzang 'di nyid sgang/
srid pa (1.7) dang por ye smon rgyal po byon/
srid pa bar mar phya (phyva) dmu gtsug gsum byung/
srid pa tha mar sgo dang ldung (ldong) brgyud byung/
dvangs snyigs bar gsum rgyal blon 'bang du ('bangs su) srid/
'dzom po'i ('dzam bu'i) gling gi bcud du de ltar chags/

dmu (1.8) brgyud rgyal rigs gdung brgyud rgyal po drug/
gsas chen lnga dang mkha' lding ('gying) byin rlobs te/



khri shes dkar po'i thugs kyi sprul pa ni/
dmu shag hos dpo rgya gnyan zla med drug/

khyad par rab rgyal bdag gi gdung (1.9) rab(s) ni/
mkha' lding ('gying) gnyan gyis byin gyis rlabs pa yi/
srid pa ye 'bum dkar po bya ba lags/
dang por dmu ri smug po'i rtse la babs/
de nas rma gnyan pom ra'i rtse la babs/
de nas mkha' 'gying ri (1.10) yi rtse mor byon/
yab myes btsan lha ye 'bum dkar po nas/
bka' drin can gyi bdag chen lha bsnyo'i bar/
rgyal rab(s) nyer lnga 'das pa'i la tshig(s) der/
rus sbal dung rna bdag nyid rgyal sar dbyung/ (1.11)
gnam bskos rgyal po dang 'og de nyid nas/
gdung brgyud dri med shel dkar 'phreng ba ltar/
bka' drin can gyi gnam mkha' rgyal po'i bar/
rgyal rab(s) nyi shu rtsa bzhi'i la tshig(s) 'dir/
rgyal bdag bsod nams dbang gi rgyal po mtshan/
mi theg theg tshul khrims gnyis sug par 'chang/
lo gsum bar du nyams myang bdar sha bcad/
bon khrims dar gyi mdud pa 'jam po dam/
rgyal khrims gser (1.12) gyi gnya' shing legs par ljid/
dbu nag kun la snying rje'i lhag bsam skyes/
drag gzhan (zhan) spyi la phan pa'i gsung shog mdzad/
phyis byon rim pas bcos bslad med par mkhyen/
bkod legs 'dir rten rgyal (1.13) srid brtan par nges/
ding yang rab du brtan pa'i rgyal mchog pa/
khu dbon slob dpon mi dbang sa skyong gang/

sa dbang khro chen skal bzang rgyal mtshan gyis/
bka' shog phyag dam 'gyur med gnang don la/ (1.14)
'dul ba'i zhing khams shar phyogs rgyal mo'i rong/
bon gyi zhing khams khri skor bcu drug mtshams/
shar phyogs shar rong dam ka sgo yan chad/
byang phyogs bye ma 'bum gling phan chad dang/
nub phyogs rab brtan sgang nag man (1.15) chad dang/
lho phyogs mchod rten dkar po tshun chad nang/

mnga' zhabs skya ser drag zhan mtha' dag la/
yab myes gong ma'i bka' lung sgrogs pa'i don/
gtso mchog thugs sprul rab brtan snang srid rgyal/ (1.16)
kha drag gnya' gnon kha dman mgon skyob yin/
'og nas khrims yig khungs thub zhib bkod ltos/
bka' las 'gal mir nyes chad srog thog 'gel/

phyi 'khor bde zhing nang 'khor skyid pa'i thabs/
bla ma slob (1.17) dpon nam mkha' la 'phur ba/
rigs(rig) gnas mkhas dang sngags pa rdo chod nus/
sku rus sku zhang sku tsha rnam gsum dang/
lha sde mi sde srid sde dpung shugs che/
g.yul ngor dpa' zhing drag rtsal ldan pa dang/
mi che (1.18) rje blon ban bon skya ser dang/
btsun mo rab 'phreng lha mchod drung skor dang/
spyi gtso yul gtso rdzong dpon gnyer pa dang/
yul pa yul mi trol pa shong tshan pa/
bcas pa'i mnga' bang(s) mtha' dag la zlo ba/

**Transliteration of the inscription contained in the bottom square of the *bka' shog*** (Fig. 2, Key No. 17)

(1.1)//gnam bskos mi dbang khro chen rgyal khab kyi/
gnyan rigs mkha' 'gying gdung las grol ba yi/
sku rtsa gdung bdag skal bzang rgyal mtshan dang/
rgyal blon (1.2) sku rus rnam bzhi'i (bzhis) chab gcig tu/
snang zhig bya 'phur bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan la/
rgyal rabs bla rabs gong ma'i lo rgyus dang/
mchod yon sbyin bdag dad dam zung (1.3) 'brel sgos/
'dun pa mi lhod gser yig tham ka 'bul/
rgyal khab bzhi bo gang yang gcig gyur gyi(s)/
bstan 'dzin bstan bdag lha dbang gtsug nor bzhin/
gcig (1.4) don thugs bsam gcig gis bsgrub zhes gsungs/
bya 'phur bla ma bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan gyis/
snang dgon bkra shis g.yung drung bon gling dang/
bya 'phur gdan (1.5) sar bkra shis rnam rgyal gling/
'gro ba'i dad rten bka' 'gyur cha gnyis dang/
rten bzhengs thugs bsam mdzad pa mang du grub/
khyad par rgyal blon 'bangs (1.6) 'khor zhabs brtan du/
zla ba gsum tsam nyin mtshan chag med par/
sku yi rim gro zhal gsungs ji bzhin bsgrubs/
dus der bdag rkyen tham ka 'di nyid dang/
srid (sri) zhu'i gus 'bul zhe sa tshad med zhus/
mngon sum tshad mas grub pa 'di bzhin no//



# Inscriptions Dating from the Reign of *btsan po* Khri lde-srong-btsan

In 1988, two Tibetan scholars from Amdo, gNya'-gong dKon-mchog tshe-brtan and Padma 'Bum, jointly published results of their field research work on rock-carvings of images and inscriptions which they discovered in 'Bis-khog and Leb-khog in the Jeykundo (sKye-rgu-mdo) region. Their work is in the form of an article written in Tibetan, entitled: *Yul shul khul gyi bod btsan po'i skabs kyi rten yig brag brkos ma 'ga'*,[1] 'Some rock-carvings of images and inscriptions of the imperial period (found) in the Yul-shul region.' After carefully examining the rock carvings, they reached the conclusion that these ancient monuments did not date from the reign of *btsan po* (emperor) Srong-btsan sgam-po (d.649) as Tibetan Buddhist tradition would have us believe, but from a much later period.

My purpose of presenting this paper on the monuments at 'Bis-khog is to give an account of my own observations on the site. In 1993, I had the good fortune of being able to go there and see the place myself. The findings that I made and the descriptions of the site which I give will inevitably be slightly different from those of my two compatriots, but that is intended in no way to devalue their work. On the contrary, my findings will bear witness to the high standard of their scholarship and further confirm their views.

During the research mission that I undertook in 1993 in Amdo and Khams under the auspices of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, I made a journey that took me from Inner Mongolia to Jyekundo through Kokonor and from Jyekundo to rGyal-rong through dKar-mdzes. I acknowledge my debt to the Tibetological Centre in Beijing which sent Dugkar Tsering, one of its personnel, to assist me throughout my journey. Although our stop in Jyekundo was only a week, it was very useful indeed.

## 1. Jyekundo

Jyekundo was known to a number of Western travellers: W. W. Rockhill was there in the 1880s; Dutreuil de Rhin and Grenard were there in 1894; E. Teichman travelled there in the 1920s; A. David-Néel passed through it in 1921; A. Migot stayed there for a while in 1946.

[1] Hereafter *rTen yig* (*Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig*, Beijing 1988, No. 4, pp.52-75).

It is situated at the confluence of three valleys, a strategic place both for commercial and military reasons, to the south of the 'Bri-chu river. In Tibetan it is traditionally known as rDza (or sGa) sKye-rgu-mdo since it is located in the centre of the rDza region. The travel routes leading from Kokonor in the east, from Nag-chu-kha in the north and from dKar-mdzes in the south all converge on it. Although traditionally it is part of the Khams province (mDo-stod), it comes under the jurisdiction of the Chenghai local authorities in the present-day Chinese administrative setup. The distance of 840 kilometres from Kokonor did not apparently discourage the authorities from including it among the administrative units of the Chenghai province.

On Chinese maps it is now called Yus-hru'u, a transcription of the Tibetan toponym Yul-shul which is in fact the name of a small district situated to the north of Jyekundo. The only reason for the arbitrary choice of the name Yul-shul for the whole region is that it is obviously a more convenient name to transcribe into Chinese than the name Jyekundo and indeed when Yul-shul is transcribed as Yus-hru'u it sounds more like a Chinese place-name.

Jyekundo was a small semi-nomadic settlement with its old Sa-skya-pa monastery, Don-'grub-gling, perched high up on its nothern hill dominating the town and the magnificent view of the three valleys. The monastery is believed to have been founded by 'Phags-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1235-1280), but it was totally destroyed by Mao's Red Guards in the 1960s. With the partial reconstruction of it a few people dressed up in Buddhist garb and calling themselves monks are allowed to be there as relics of the past for tourist purposes. The town Jyekundo itself is fast extending with the settlement programmes of Chinese population transference and it serves as the seat of the 'Autonomous Prefecture of the Tibetans in Yus-hru'u' (Yus-hru'u bod-rigs rang-skyong khul) under whose jurisdiction there are 6 counties (*rdzong*): Nang-chen, Chu-dmar, Yus-hru'u, Khri-'du, rDza-stod, and 'Bri-stod.

## 2. 'Bis rNam-snang

The most holy place in the local area of Jyekundo is no doubt the site of 'Bis rNam-snang gtsug-lag-khang. It is situated in a rocky gorge known to the local people as 'Bis-khog, tucked away under the overlapping of its low hill ridges at the mouth of the gorge as one enters it from the main valley, called dPal-thang, to the south-west of Jyekundo. The basin of the gorge is drained by a small but torrential stream gushing forth from the north-east towards south-west. About a half kilometre upstream the gorge becomes itself a wide open valley with yak herds scattered on either side of the water.



'Bis-khog is situated at a distance of about 25 kilometres from the town of Jyekundo as one travels up the river dPal-chu which flows from the south northwards in the dPal-thang valley. The temple of 'Bis rNam-snang, i.e. rNam-snang (rNam-par snang-mdzad, Vairocana) in 'Bis-khog is situated to the north of the stream. It stands close to and leaning directly against a very high hillside, a flat and vertical rock-face which serves as the back wall of the main temple building. It is on this rock-face that we find carved in relief (*'bur du dod pa*) a seated figure identified as Thub-pa gangs-chen mtsho-rgyal i.e. a form of Buddha Vairocana in normal human size, and flanked on either side by eight standing figures, four on the right, two above and two below and four on the left in the same fashion. The main figure is seated on a lotus throne supported by two lions standing back to back. Each figure is identified by the name in Tibetan engraved on the rock just beside its pedestal. The height of the standing figures is about a metre. They represent the eight Bodhisattvas which form the entourage of Buddha Vairocana. The seated figure is about 3 metres high from the temple floor whereas the standing ones in the bottom row are about one metre high from the floor.

The main image was draped in a silk robe so that it was hard to see it properly. On the other hand, the figures of the eight Bodhisattvas were visible, but regrettably they are all covered with thick plaster and then painted over in bright colours with Chinese style costumes. The plaster work and painting therefore prevent one from making any proper observation on the real artistic merit of the work. However, as the two Tibetan authors pointed out, the style of the images is most probably that of the Chinese (*rgya lugs*). I prefer to leave this question to the specialists in iconography and art history.

The temple is slightly oblong and has no upper floors. It has a hall separated from the main sanctuary, and a very large courtyard with a low wall on all sides and a gate opening on to the stream. In the courtyard there are small houses for the monks mostly of the bKa'-brgyud-pa order, but the building on the right of the temple was crushed by a large boulder that fell from the hillside behind the temple around 1990. The rubble was still there at the time of my visit.

It was here that I came upon an inscription in 16 lines (hereafter Inscription I) covered with soil and grass growing over it on one side. The letters of the inscription are inscribed, as the ancient steles in central Tibet, and not in relief, on a steep and rugged rock-face about 2 metres high above the ground. I could see the word only *khyi'i lo la*, in the dog year. The first line of the inscription measures about one metre in length and the next one starts shorter than the first one, so do all the rest of the lines. The rock-face with the inscription forms part of the adjoining rock-face bearing the images in the temple. However, the back-end of the main

temple wall on its right leans over the rock-face and so covers the right ends of the lines of the inscription. It was therefore impossible to read the inscription in its entirety without removing parts of the temple wall! This was of course out of the question since the temple is a 'cultural relic' protected by the 'state'.

The two Tibetan authors have not specifically mentioned the existence of this particular inscription. Was it because of the building that was crushed that they could not see it? I will come back to this question below. I came away with a heavy heart without being able to make a copy of my own discovery and the photograph I took does not enable one to decipher the visible parts of the inscription. Nevertheless, it certainly contains a version of the historical account of the rock-carvings engraved on the stele in 10 lines discovered by the two Tibetan authors (hereafter Inscription II, Plate 5. This latter inscription is carved in on a small square rock slab. The two Tibetan authors have made a copy of this inscription of which I shall make an English translation below. The rock slab bearing the inscription, whose letters are painted in red, is now fitted into the front wall of the main temple building on the left as one enters it. According to the two Tibetan authors, they were told by an old nun A-ne mTsho-rgyas sgrol-ma that it was she who saved the rock slab from destruction by the Red Guards. The two Tibetan authors compliment her for stating that she was courageous enough not to yield when she was threatened with death by the Red Guards unless she showed them the slab bearing the inscription. She was 66 when the two Tibetan authors met her in 1986.[2]

## 3. 'Temple of Princess Wencheng'

Although the pilgrimage site in 'Bis-khog is known simply as 'Bis rNam-snang to the local Tibetans, it is now called on Chinese tourist maps 'Temple of Princess Wencheng'. And there are several reasons for this: Wencheng Kong-jo was the Chinese wife and one of the five wives of Srong-btsan sgam-po. She enjoys tremendous prestige in Tibetan Buddhist tradition which elevates her to the statuts of a 'manifestation' (*rnam 'phrul*) of the Buddhist goddess Tārā. Legends have grown over the centuries concerning her activities in Tibet as the initiator of Chinese astrology and geomancy as well as the author of rock-carvings of Buddhist images in several places. It is therefore not surprising that we find a Tibetan Buddhist monk of the Sa-skya-pa order from the monastery of Don-'grub-gling in Jyekundo writing a guide of the temple attributing the rock-carvings to the Chinese wife of Srong-btsan sgam-po. His name is Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho and he wrote the guide in 1958 when Chinese

2. *Ibid.*, p.65.



propaganda was in full swing bragging about the 'unity of the mother land'. It was just after the setting up of the 'Autonomous Prefecture of the Tibetans in Yus-hru'u'.

The guide is significantly entitled: *mDo stod gnas chen 'bis rnam snang zhes lha cig rgya bza' kong jos brkos pa'i dkar chag don bzhin ston pa'i zhal lung,*'The guide of the rock-carving made *by* the Chinese wife, Kong-jo, the unique goddess, a great pilgrimage site in Khams known as 'Bis rNam-snang, being the *viva-voce* precept that reveals the reality'.

This guide was no longer available for purchase in Jyekundo when I was there. However, it is clear from the passage of it quoted by the two Tibetan authors[3] that Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho ascribes not only the rock-carvings but also the temple building to Wencheng, hence 'Temple of Princess Wencheng', without providing any kind of basis for his assertions. It is possible that the author simply wrote the guide not only with his religious conviction concerning the Buddhist legends of the Chinese consort but also under political coercion. I myself witnessed a relevant incident while I was busy taking some photographs in the temple. A group of pilgrims, mostly local nomads, entered the temple and the chief of the caretakers, who was a monk, diligently and in a vivid manner told the pilgrims how Wencheng came to the place on her way to central Tibet and made the rock-carvings, implying in such a way that the 'unity of the Tibetan and Chinese peoples' dates already from this period! The nomads, no doubt, believed all that they had heard especially as such words were uttered by a respectable looking Buddhist monk.

## 4. The dates of the rock-carvings in 'Bis-khog

We now come to the crucial question: during which reign of the Tibetan kings were the Buddhist figures at 'Bis-khog carved on the rock-face? At first sight, the answer seems to be shrouded in multiple problems, but thanks to A-ne mTsho-rgyas sgrol-ma who saved Inscription II the answer seems to be less complicated than otherwise. From Inscription II the two Tibetan authors have tentatively determined the date 806 A.D. for the dog year mentioned in the inscription under the reign of *btsan po* Khri lDe-srong-btsan (776-c. 815).[4]

Inscription II is of genuinely ancient origin and there is no doubt about its authenticity judging from the style and vocabulary of the language in which it is composed. It is concerned with the historical account of the rock-carvings of the Buddhist figures at 'Bis-khog although At present I possess no information concerning where exactly the rock slab bearing Inscription II was found and situated at the site. The two

3. *Ibid*, pp.55-56.
4. *Ibid, p. 64.*

Tibetan authors simply state that the nun had saved it,[5] but they do not make it clear where it originally was - perhaps this was already unknown when they were at the place - nor do they relate the historical account contained in Inscription II to that contained in the other inscription (that which I call Inscription I), i.e. the one which I came upon but of which I was unable to make a copy owing to the obstruction of the temple wall. They must have seen Inscription I, because they quoted a passage from the guide by Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho which clearly states the existence of this inscription on the rock-face situated on the right-hand side of the images. While there is no doubt that the purpose of Inscription II was to give historical evidence for the rock-carvings of the Buddhist figures and holy texts (*dar ma*), it does *not* mention the name of the place, which is why it is important to know where the rock slab was originally.

The two Tibetan authors, on the other hand, state that Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho writing his guide has probably followed the prestigious Buddhist clerics such as Bu-ston who gives in his *chos 'byung* Khri lDe-srong-btsan instead of Khri Srong-btsan as the regal name of Srong-btsan sgam-po.[6] Bu-ston also writes Khri lDe-btsan as the regal name of Sad-na-legs which further shows the existence of confusion concerning these royal names in his sources.[7] Whatever the sources may have been, Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho has taken the king mentioned in Inscription II as being Srong-btsan sgam-po (d. 649) and assigned the rock-carvings to Wencheng, the king's Chinese wife, since she was known in legends to have initiated rock-carvings of Buddhist images in Tibet. He therefore ascribes the rock-carvings to 639 this being a dog year.[8]

However, the other source, which no doubt prompted the assertions of Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho and which erroneously assigns the rock-carvings at 'Bis and lDan-ma-brag to Wencheng, is the so-called *Mani bka' 'bum*, a collection of assorted and anonymous texts based upon a total muddle, but old enough, having been compiled towards the end of the twelfth century, to influence the writers of *chos 'byung* type works in the following centuries. It is the principal Tibetan Buddhist work magnifying the legendary aspects of Srong-btsan sgam-po and his Nepalese and Chinese wives. Two sections of this collection are devoted to legends such as Wencheng's travel to Tibet from China and her supposed work on the rock-carvings in places where she stopped on the way. In one section it is stated that she stopped at lDan-ma-brag and made

5. *Ibid.*, pp.58-59.
6. *Ibid.*, p.59.
7. Szerb, 1990: 7,43.
8. *rTen yig*, p.58.



engravings of some Buddhist texts on stones[9] and another section mentions that she reached the end of the plain Dza-yul-thang before going to lDan-ma-brag.[10] It is possible that the toponym Dza-yul refers to Jyekundo. As mentioned above, its region was traditionally known as rDza Jyekundo. It is situated to the south-east of a place still called rDza-stod, the Upper rDza and to the south of 'Bri-chu and rDza-chu (Mekong). The *Maṇi bka' 'bum* is therefore the earliest known source for the legend of Wencheng's engraving Buddhist images and texts on rocks in Tibet.

There are two pieces of conclusive evidence for this false assignment to Wencheng. First, it is clearly and unmistakably stated in the inscription of lDan-ma-brag[11] and in Inscription II at 'Bis-khog, that the reigning emperor in Tibet of the period was *btsan po* Khri lDe-srong-btsan. Second, in both inscriptions at lDan-ma-brag and 'Bis-khog there is no indication whatsoever of Wencheng's association with the rock-carvings. Had these inscriptions not been discovered the claim of 'Cliffs Clue to Tibetan, Han Ties' by the China Daily[12] would surely have been given further credit at least by the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*. The length to which Tibetan Buddhist tradition went to endow Wencheng with such piety is all the more incongruous when we consider that she was after all not even Buddhist[13] and still less a princess.[14]

The two Tibetan authors therefore have rightly rejected the date 639 and they themselves put forward 806 as the most likely date for the dog year.[15] In Inscription II mention is made of the father and son(s) (*yab sras*) of the *btsan po*. Now, *btsan po* Khri lDe-srong-btsan was born in 776 A.D., but the year of his death still remains uncertain. During the period in which he was active, there were three dog years: 782 when he was aged 7; 794 when he was 19 and finally 806 when he was 31. He probably died in 815 when he was 40, because in that year he was succeeded by Khri gTsug-lde-btsan (b.805). It is most unlikely that the rock-carvings were made in 782, because in that year he had not yet ascended the throne and could not have had offspring. Therefore 794 and 806 are the years one of which should be the dog year in question, but for the moment, I find no good evidence for the one rather than the other.

9. *Chos skyong ba'i rgyal po srong btsan sgam po'i mdzad pa rnam thar gyi skor*, f.212a5. The last folio of the xylographic edition of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* I use here is missing. I am therefore at present unable to state in which place in Tibet it originates.
10. *KChK* (1), fol.741, 3-4 (Heller, 1988: n.1). This version of *KChK* is not in the edition I use.
11. Heller, 1994, appendix.
12. Thursday, August 28, 1986.
13. *Cf.* Demiéville 1952: 185-88.
14. Bacot 1934/35: 10; Demiéville 1952: 7.
15. *rTen yig*, p. 58, 64.

However, the monkey year given in the inscription at lDan-ma-brag is thought to be either 804 or 816.[16] However, *DChB* states[17] that the *btsan po* died in autumn of the sheep year (815) aged 40 at sBrags-phu. If this is correct, it would seem that the monkey year in the lDan-ma-brag inscription was 804 and the dog year in Inscription II was 806.

Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho, the author of the guide, assigns the building of the temple to the seventh century. However, there is no evidence whatsoever for this assignment. His assertion is based on the identical names of the kings which he got confused and this finally paved the way for the false appellation: 'Temple of Princess Wencheng', for which there is, as we have seen, no historical basis.

## 5. The Translation of Inscription II

1. In the dog year, images were carved in relief.
2. Holy texts of prayers were inscribed in the reign of the emperor Khri lDe-srong-btsan,
3. for the lord, ministers, benefactors, and all sentient beings;
4. the monk Ye-shes-dbyangs, the great translator, recruited a team of
5. artists: headed by the monks Rin(-chen) snang-mdzad, rGyal bzang, dPal-ldan so that together they might do a good piece of work
6. plus some strong men, they carved out images, inscribed holy texts on the rocks,
7. as a form of support for the Three Ratna. Whatever sentient beings may see them,
8. touch them, prostrating themselves before them, hear of them or remember them will have moral reward
9. and primeval knowledge. By virtue of their devotion, may the Emperor, the father and his offspring and all sentient beings
10. realise Enlightenment, the supreme goal!

The transliteration of the Tibetan text of Inscription II

1. *khyi'i lo la sku gzugs 'bur du brkos pa dang*
2. *dar ma kun bris pa'i smon lam la sogs pa btsan po khr(i) lde srong btsan gyi*
3. *sku ring la rje blon yon bdag dang sems can thams cad kyi don gyi phyir dge*
4. *slong lo chen ye shes dbyangs kyis bgyiste/ bzo bo dge slong rin (chen) snang mdzad dang/ rgyal*
5. *bzang dang dpal ldan dang lag dpon thams cad dge legs su byed pa* (the reading of the word *byed pa* is uncertain) *dang gtsug nas*
6. *bla la mi stobs ldan rnams ste/ brag la sku gzugs dang dar ma 'di rnams bris pa dang*
7. *dkon mchog gsum gyi rten gyi rnam pa sems can gang dag gis mthong*
8. *ba dang reg pa dang phyag 'tshal ba dang dran pa'i bsod nams*
9. *dang ye shes kyis btsan po yab sras dang sems can thams cad*
10. *bla na med pa'i byang chub du grub par smon to//*



*Plate 5: Inscription II. 'Bis rNam-snang gtsug-lag-khang. (SGK 1993)*

The reading of this inscription is quite straightforward compared with other ancient steles except in one place, line 6, where the use of the term *bla la* is unusual, but it has here the sense of 'on top of', hence 'plus'. It is clear that the work was carried out under the direction of a monk called Ye-shes-dbyangs who is described as a 'great translator' though unknown as such among the Tibetan translators of the period. His family name is not mentioned. He may be identical with Gor Ye-shes-dbyangs mentioned as one of the leaders who organised the rock-carvings at lDan-ma-brag (Heller, 1994). A monk called sBug Ye-shes-dbyangs is known to the Cig-car-ba tradition,[18] but it is most unlikely that this

16. Heller, 1994: 335.
17. *DChB*, p.359.

18. Karmay, 1988a: 88.

person has any connexion with Gor Ye-shes-dbyangs since they have different family names.

## 6. The pre-eminence of Buddha Vairocana in the imperial period

In a short article, Hugh Richardson (1990) brought to the attention of scholars the importance of Buddha Vairocana from the period of the reign of *btsan po* Khri Srong-lde-btsan (742-c.797). The image of rNam-par snang-mdzad (Vairocana) in 'Bis-khog provides a further good example for his point. There are in fact several other instances of images of Buddha Vairocana which are known to the local Tibetans with short names, for instance: lHo-brag rNam-snang[19] or mKho-mthing rNam-snang;[20] and 'Bo-yul rNam-snang.[21]

In all these pilgrim sites the central seated figure is that of Vairocana and usually flanked on either side by standing figures of the eight Bodhisattvas. The set is often called the 'Nine Divinities' (*lha dgu*). It is in this same setting that the *jo bo* in Jo-khang is arranged; likewise Vairocana on the top floor of the main temple in bSam-yas. Khri Srong-lde-btsan is believed to have composed a hymn in praise of these divinities. It is at the beginning of a text related to his critical reflections on the question of adopting Buddhism as the state religion of Tibet.[22] However, the exact origin of this set of Buddhist figures does not seem to be known. The name Vairocana, 'Resplendent' was originally a title of the Buddha Śākyamuni, but later in tantric developments, particularly with the set of the five 'Buddha families', Vairocana as a form of the Buddha occupies the central position in the scheme of the five 'Buddha families' in Yoga Tantras (Snellgrove, 1987: 196). While Buddha Vairocana occupies a pre-eminent position in Chinese and Japanese Mahayanic Buddhism the cult of Buddha Vairocana lost its lustre in Tibet from about the eleventh century. Tibetan Buddhists from that period preferred for their tantric practice the teaching contained in the 'New Tantras' newly imported from India and Nepal with macabre looking divinities that often have multiple animal heads and arms and are in *yab yum* embrace. Nevertheless, the image of Vairocana remained in ancient sites as an object of veneration by pilgrims.

19. Kun-grol grags-pa (b.1700-1766), *Sangs rgyas bstan pa spyi yi 'byung khungs yid bzhin nor bu 'dod pa 'jo ba'i gter mdzod* (*Three Sources for a History of Bon*, Dolanji, Himachal Pradesh, India, 1974, p.318).
20. *TTGL*, p.115.
21. For references see n.23.
22. *bKa' yang dag pa'i tshad ma, T* Vol.144, No.5839 (Stein, 1988: 331).



In his autobiography[23] the Bonpo *gter ston* Sangs-rgyas gling-pa (1704-1734) reports that while he was travelling in 1729 through Khams on his way to rGyal-rong he visited a temple containing an image of Vairocana together with the eight Bodhisattvas which he assigns to Wencheng. However, he does not make very clear whether the images are carved on stones although he tells the same story of Wencheng's rock-carvings on her way to Tibet. The temple is called 'Bo-yul rNam-snang. He describes the place 'Bol-yul as being in the centre of sMar-khams ze(zal)-mo-sgang and situated in between the rivers Da-chu (Zla-chu) and 'Bri-chu. He goes on to state that he was shown the temple of Buddhist images and was asked if he could write a guide to it. At first he thought he could not, but after further thought and an instructive dream he came to understand that the images in question were those of Vairocana and the eight Bodhisattvas and that they were made by Wencheng in the time of Srong-btsan sgam-po! This account shows again how widely spread in space and time the legends of Wencheng were in Tibet. But there doesn't seem to be any doubt about the existence of a temple containing an image of Vairocana in 'Bo. Let us hope that one day somebody will find it and reveal its secrets.

## Conclusion

Although a number of Western travellers passed through Jyekundo from the last quarter of the nineteenth century and a Tibetan lama wrote a guide to the temple of 'Bis rNam-snang in 1958, the pilgrim site succeeded in retaining its mystery. Even after the somewhat incomplete publication of the two Tibetan authors and the appearance of photographs of some of the images in recent Chinese publications, the place somehow escaped the specialists' attention. It further confirms observations made concerning the pre-eminence of the Vairocana cult in the Tibetan imperial period.

The other aspect that the present study reveals is that the legend of Wencheng is so deeply rooted in Tibetan Buddhist tradition that even today Tibetan Buddhist monks cannot believe that her association with the rock-carvings is just a legend. This blind devotion has indeed provided an excellent means - both psychologically and religiously- for the new masters of Tibet to utilize the simple believing masses such as the nomads in Jyekundo.

23. *rDo rje rin chen phreng ba'i rgyan* (Cover title: *sPrul sku sangs rgyas gling pa'i rnam thar*), Vol.3, p.138-40. Place of publication and dates are not given.

# PART II

# rDzogs chen Philosophy in Tibetan Buddhism

# The Doctrinal Position of rDzogs chen from the Tenth to the Thirteenth Centuries

It is of course impossible to treat a subject so vast as rDzogs chen in so short a paper as this. However, there is no reason why one should not explore this field of which so little is known. In this paper I will try to discuss the doctrinal position of rDzogs chen from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries and indicate its main theories, paying particular attention to the *Kun byed rgyal po* which is considered to be the fundamental text of the teaching by the rNying-ma-pa. I am currently engaged in an effort to study this work in relation to other rDzogs chen texts of the Nying-ma-pa and Bonpo who also consider themselves adherents of this doctrine. In the present state of my research no precise conclusions can be drawn in this paper.

The texts on rDzogs chen are very numerous indeed in both the rNying-ma-pa and Bonpo traditions. They are only now becoming available to scholars for research and here it may be appropriate to express our warm tanks to Mr. Tashi Gangpa who so efficiently published in India a whole set of rDzogs chen works known as *Vairo rgyud 'bum* which comprises about 154 texts. The *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* which has a long section on rDzogs chen works somewhat overlaps those contained in *Vairo rgyud 'bum*. As for the Bonpo works on rDzogs chen so far four are published: the *Zhang zhung snyan brgyud* (Karmay, 1972, No.50); the *sNyan brgyud rig pa gcer mthong* (Karmay, 1972, No. 59); the *sNyan brgyud skya smug, published* in 1973 and the *bsGrags pa skor gsum* (Karmay, 1972, No.54). The recent work *dByings rig mdzod* (Karmay, 1972, No.94) in two volumes composed by Shar-rdza bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan (1859-1934) in 1907-1909 is also published.

Coming back to the text *Kun byed rgyal po*, it is one of the three principal authorities that the rNying-ma-pa recognise. These three are called *mdo*, *sgyur*, *sems: mdo* refers to the tantra *dGongs 'bus* (Otani 457, Cone 462, Tōhoku 834, sNar-thang, Wa 267a3-407b5, Lhasa Wa 98 323a-472b); *sgyur* refers to the *sGyur 'phrul drva ba*, a group of tantras whose chief text is the very much disputed tantra known as the *gSang ba snying po* (Otani 455, Cone 460, Tōhoku 832, sNar-thang Wa 139a6-171a4, Lhasa Wa 98,176a-213a), and *sems* refers to the *Sems phyogs*, a term that covers the rDzogs chen texts and the teachings contained therein, whose fundamental text is the *Byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po*,

which is the text to be discussed in this paper. Although there are number of works which could be considered equally important in rDzogs chen, the *Kun byed* is the only one that has found a place in all the editions of *K* (Otani 451, Cone 456, Dza 1b1-92a1, Tōhoku 828, sNar-thang Dza 1b1-120b1, Lhasa Dza 17, 1b-123a) and is of course included in *NyG* (*rNying rgyud dkar chag* of 'Jigs-med gling-pa [1730-1798], fol. 228b). The *Kun byed* is divided into three parts with 84 chapters, but only the second and third parts are to be found in the *Vairo rgyud 'bum* of the present edition (Vol. 1, No. 4, Chap. 58-84, pp. 383-435). However, the ancient catalogue called *Pho brang stong thang ldan dkar dkar chag* does not mention it.

The first and second parts of the *Kun byed* contain translators' colophons which are more or less identical and according to them the text was translated from Sanskrit by Vairocana with the assistance of his teacher Śrīsiṁhaprabhā whose name is preceded by the title *rgya gar gyi mkhan po*, the *upādhyāya* of India. Despite its Sanskrit title and the translators' colophons, the work appeared completely inauthentic to opponents of the rNying-ma-pa school, whose criteria are based on stylistic considerations as well as the unorthodox views that it contains. The historicity of Vairocana has not been questioned as he was one of the first seven Tibetans who took ordination in bSam-yas and he is also mentioned in a Dunhuang manuscript *PT* 44. His activities in connection with the rDzogs chen texts of the Bon-po make one wonder if this is the reason why Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od who lived in the late eleventh century is so critical of the *Kun byed* in his *bka' shog* (see Article No. 2, text No. 41) which I will discuss shortly.

However, the origins of Śrīsiṁhaprabhā are by no means clear. His name would be in Tibetan dPal-gyi Seng-ge-'od, but is translated as dPal-gyi Seng-ge mgon-po in the colophon of the second part of our text. As his name is preceded by the title *upādhyāya* one might assume that he was of Indian origin, but the sources that I have been able to consult do not agree on this point. In the ordinance of Zhi-ba-'od a Śrīsiṁha of Nepal is mentioned. According to the *Padma thang yig* (f. 63a, ed. sDe-dge) he was from Suvarnadvīpa (gSer-gling) and was a teacher of Padmasambhava, but Klong-chen rab-'byams (1308-1363) tells us that he was born in China and moreover, was teacher of Vimalamitra (*Bla ma yang tig*, Kha f.4a, ed. sDe-dge). Now Vimalamitra we know was in Tibet towards the end of the eighth century as a teacher of Myang Ting-nge-'dzin who himself was tutor to Khri lDe-srong-btsan when the king was a young prince, a fact proved by the eighth century inscription of Zhva'i lha-khang (Richardson, 1985: 46-61). Now, if this enigmatic, Śrīsiṁha was a historical master who is said to have bestowed on Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana the rDzogs chen precepts, he would no doubt be the source of



the rDzogs chen thought in Tibet. However, the legendary account of Vairocana's meeting with Śrīsiṁha in India does not seem to go back beyond the thirteenth century. Several versions of Vairocana's biography are said to exist and the one which is most commonly known, is *VD*. This is the *bka' ma* version, which is to say a text that enjoyed a continuous transmission unlike the *gter ma*. It was evidently compiled by a certain 'Brong-ban bKra-shis 'byung-gnas from many different versions of the biography. Dharma seng-ge, the editor of the xylographic edition (Lhasa) states in his editorial colophon that the *bka' ma* version does not greatly differ in its essential parts from the *gter ma* version which according to him was found by Jo-sman; and the reason he gives for editing the *bka' ma* version is that the *gter ma* version was too difficult to understand for ordinary people though more authentic than the other one (*VD*, f. 129b). The name of the *gter ston* Jo-sman is a short form of Jo-mo sMan-mo, a *yoginī* who lived from 1248 to 1283 and was one of the 5 wives of the well-known rNying-ma-pa *gter ston*, Guru Chos-dbang (1212-1270). Now, the same story, which narrates Vairocana's meeting with Śrīsiṁha, found in *VD*, is reproduced in the *Padma thang yig* (f. 62b3-63b6) by O-rgyan gling-pa. But here Vairocana's name is replaced by that of Padmasambhava, who, according to the *Padma thang yig* met Śīsiṁhaprabhā in Suvarnadvīpa and not in India. Now, if O-rgyan gling-pa's finding of the *Padma thang yig* took place in 1352 it would be about 64 years later when he introduced the same story into his work.

Now I shall go on to the doctrinal position of rDzogs chen. At the dawn of the bKa'-gdams-pa school, rDzogs chen was already in a precarious position. Its great exponents like gNubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes were beginning to lose their prominence, but the attraction of the practices of rDzogs chen still cannot be underestimated towards the end of the tenth century. It is well-known that the king of mNga'-ris, the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od disapproved of certain tantric practices which were then very popular in Tibet and he issued an ordinance (*bka' shog*, see Article No. 1) in which he condemned them. Moreover, he sent invitations to Indian masters to come to his kingdom to straighten up the crooked practices, but when this plan failed, he decided to send young Tibetans to Kashmir to study Buddhism with Lo-chen Rin-chen bzang-po (958-1055). In the ordinance of Ye-shes-'od, rDzogs chen is condemned as a false doctrine along with other tantric practices in the following words: "many perverse religious practices called rDzogs chen are flourishing" (*rdzogs chen ming btags chos log mang du dar/* see Article No. 1, line 45 of the Tibetan text), but the interpretation of this line differs from one scholar to another among the rNying-ma-pa, and Sog-zlog-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan of the seventeenth century has preferred to interpret it in this way: "many perverse religious practices are flourishing under the name of rDzogs

chen". So according to him the king was not condemning the rDzogs chen teaching itself. Whatever the case may be, no specific text of rDzogs chen or other tantras are mentioned in this ordinance. It was Zhi-ba-'od, the grand-nephew of the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od, who in his *bka' shog*, however, mentions along with other tantras that the *Kun byed*, our text, is a work by Drang-nga Shag-tshul (*NgD*, f. 263). This personality, though without any doubt a Tibetan, remains for the present unknown. It would have been more reasonable for Zhi-ba-'od to ascribe the *Kun byed* to Vairocana rather than to this unknown Tibetan, for later in the fifteenth century, the Sa-skya-pa scholar Pan-chen Śākya mchog-ldan (1428-1507) had attributed it to Vairocana (*NgD*, f. 347), but in any case there is little measure of agreement among the critics of the rNying-ma-pa concerning the authorship of this work. It has become a very confused subject to the extent that the dGe-lugs-pa historian, Sumpa Ye-shes dpal-'byor (1704-1788) was himself content to call the work simply 'spurious' (*rdzun ma*) without ascribing it to anyone. He does not even call it *Kun byed*, but *mDo lung*, a dubious title under which it is known among the dGe-lugs-pa (*PJ*, p. 381, Calcutta 1908). This title has been taken from what one might call the colophon title of the *Kun byed* where the work is named *mDo lung brgyad cu rtsa bzhi pa.*

However, it is clear that in the opinion of Zhi-ba-'od, the *Kun byed* is an independent Tibetan work which he therefore considered not genuine. Moreover, he is specific about its doctrinal content, which he considers not only spurious, but also influenced by Hindu doctrines. The existence of the *Kun byed* in the early eleventh century is therefore attested by the *bka' shog*, which unlike the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od's undated ordinance, states that it was issued in the year water-monkey. There are three possibilities during this period for the year water-monkey: 972 or 1032 or 1092. 972, I think, would be too early, because Zhi-ba'od was a disciple of Rin-chen bzang-po, who in 972 was only 15 years old. 1092 would be rather too long for the life of Zhi-ba-'od who is not even mentioned among the great figures attending the famous Religious Council of the Fire-dragon (*me pho 'brug gi chos 'khor*). This council was called up by the king of Pu-hrangs, rTse-lde, in 1076. 1032 therefore is the most fitting for the year water-monkey in which the *bka' shog* was issued (but *cf.* Article No. 2, pp. 29-30.

The origins of the criticism made against rDzogs chen as an offshoot of the Ch'an teaching i.e. the Dhyāna school in China is not an easy matter to discuss here. The orthodox scholars among the Sa-skya-pa, 'Bri-gung bka'-brgyud-pa and dGe-lugs-pa have never failed to connect rDzogs chen with Hva-shang's teaching whenever the opportunity arose. Consequently the rNying-ma-pa apologists produced a bulky literature from the fifteenth to about the seventeenth centuries whose main concern



is to defend their doctrines. It was, however, from about the thirteenth century onwards that the criticism of rDzogs chen as being the teaching of Hva-shang Mahāyāna came into vogue. Neither of the criticisms of the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od and his grand-nephew nor the refutations (*'byams yig*) of 'Gos Khug-pa lhas-btsas who lived in the eleventh century had levelled the charge of the Ch'an teaching against rDzogs chen. In the refutations of 'Gos Khug-pa lhas-btsas and Chag Chos-rje-dpal (119-1264), rDzogs chen is described as simply non-Buddhist.

When Sa-paṇ Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan (1182-1251) stated in his famous controversial work (*DR*, p.309-2-5) that the teaching of Mahāmudrā of the bKa'-brgyud-pa was identical in essence to the 'Chinese system' of rDzogs chen, he apparently had in mind the rDzogs chen of the rNying-ma-pa, for he further states in the same work (p. 309-2-3) that after the collapse of the old Tibetan kingdom, people wrote books basing their ideas on the works of the 'Chinese master'(*rgya nag mkhan po*). This refers to Hva-shang Mahāyāna. Commentators of *DR*, for example, Go-ram-pa bSod-nams seng-ge (1429-1489) considered that the *Kun byed* was one of the works whose origin is questionable (*SK*, Vol. 14, No. 5, p. 193,1). If Sa-paṇ is ambiguous in this statement in *DR*, he is, however, explicit about what he means by the writings of Hva-shang Mahāyāna in his *sKyes bu dam pa rnams la springs ba'i yi ge* (*SK*, Vol. 5, No. 30). This is a letter or memorandum circulated among the scholars in Tibet by him to validate his statements in *DR* which he composed no doubt long before his visit to the Mongol court of Godan in China in 1244 at the age of 63. In this Sa-paṇ enumerates five titles attributing them to Hva-shang Mahāyāna. About three quarters of a century later in 1322 Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290-1364) reproduced the same titles in his *BTChB* (p.887) (Obermiller, 1931: Vol. II, 192).

Now, at least three of these titles may be identified among the Dunhuang manuscripts preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. The first title *bSam gtan nyal ba'i 'khor lo* is to be found in *PT* 811, but unfortunately there is only the title which is somewhat longer than the one given by Sa-paṇ. It reads: *bSam gtan gyi mkhan po nyal ba'i 'khor lo sems bde bar bzhag pa'i* ...and then abruptly ends. Obermiller preferred to put the title into Sanskrit: *Dhyāna-svapna-cakra.* Sa-paṇ's interpretation of this title would be "the Wheel of contemplation that allows one to lie down".

The 2nd title is *bSam gtan gyi lon*, "Treatise on the *dhyana* meditation" (see below for the origin of the term *lon*). This is to be found in *PT* 117 where the final 24 lines of the text are identified by the title given at the end: *bsam gtan gyi lon rdzogs so/* According to Sa-paṇ this treatise was written in order to demonstrate the essential points in the first work, the *bSam gtan nyal ba'i 'khor lo*. Obermiller this time translates it

into English as "the Attainment of the State of Absorption". This translation of the term *lon* as 'attainment' is made to accord with the following title *bSam gtan gyi yang lon* which is translated by him as "the Repeated Attainment". Sa-paṇ's interpretation of this title would be simply "An additional treatise to the *bSam gtan gyi lon*" and this according to Sa-paṇ was intended to refute criticism that may be raised against the first work, i.e. *bSam gtan nyal ba'i 'khor lo*. The translation of the title *bSam gtan gyi yang lon* as "the Repeated Attainment" is also put into French by Demiéville (1952: 13, n. 1): "L'obtention répétée". However, a more correct rendering would be "the additional treatise on Dhyanā" taking the word *lon* to be the Chinese word for śāstra *lùn*.

The 3rd title is *mDo sde brgyad cu'i khungs* which Obermiller correctly translates: "the 80 sūtras as scriptural sources". Sa-paṇ says that Hva-shang Mahāyāna composed it as scriptural evidence for his argument. However, while we cannot determine whether Hva-shang Mahāyāna was the actual author of the two previous works mentioned owing to their fragmentary nature, it is certain that Hva-shang Mahāyāna was not the only one to whom a work with this title is attributed. *PT* 818 is a work with the same title, but it is again unfortunately only fragmentary. This title can also be found in another manuscript *PT* 996 where it is stated that a *mDo sde brgyad cu'i khungs* was composed by a certain sPug Ye-shes-dbyangs and in any case no mention of Hva-shang Mahāyāna is made (Lalou, 1939: 520, f. 4a). Although we are in no doubt that these treatises mentioned by Sa-paṇ are concerned with the Ch'an teaching in Tibet in the eighth century, his criticism of rDzogs chen originating in the Ch'an teaching has little basis. Like the Ch'an, rDzogs chen is sometimes called *rtsol med kyi bstan pa*, 'the doctrine of spontaneity', but that is only one aspect of it.

The fundamental theory in rDzogs chen formulated in the *Kun byed* is the 'Primordial Basis' (*gdod ma'i gzhi*) which is a state transcending both the phenomenon of *saṃsāra* and the noumenon of *nirvāṇa*. It is a state where neither beings nor Buddhas are conceived of. This 'Primordial Basis' is nothing but in the form of pure and brilliant luminosity from which five kinds of different coloured lights shine forth. When one realizes it, it becomes itself *rig pa*, enlightenment, and the lights manifest the five kinds of wisdom, but if one fails to recognize it, it turns itself into *ma rig pa*, ignorance, and the five lights evolve into five poisons and they in turn into the five aggregates which constitute the human body leading subsequently into the abyss of *samsāra*. Ādibuddha who is also called Kun-tu bzang-po is the first being to recognize himself and the five lights originating in him. In the *Kun byed* this 'Primordial Basis' is described as the 'creator' or 'doer' (*byed pa po*) of the world, so it is called *Kun byed rgyal po*, the 'king who does everything' by which the text is



thus known. The emphasis laid upon the 'Primordial Basis' as the 'creator' thus brings immediately to mind the *prakṛtī* of the philosophy of Sāmkhya. The cosmological significance given to this luminous mind is not quite in accordance with the essential Buddhist concepts, but is a central point developed very largely in the rDzogs chen of the Bonpo, especially in the *Zhang zhung snyan brgyud*. It is because of the penetration of the theory of the 'five lights of the luminous mind' into the *Kun byed* and its similarity to the concept of *prakṛtī* of the Sāmkhya as 'creator' that the orthodox critics have had no hesitation in calling rDzogs chen heretical. Perhaps Chag Chos-rje-dpal had this point in mind when he says in his *sNgags log sun 'byin* (MS f. 3b): "rDzogs chen is nothing but a blend of the doctrines of the *mu stegs pa* (*tīrthika*) in India and that of the Bonpo in Tibet".

The other distinctive idea in rDzogs chen is that of the 'Rainbow body' (*'ja' lus*), but this is not expounded explicitly in the *Kun byed*. In the *Zhang zhung snyan brgyud*, on the other hand, it is treated as the ultimate goal that an adept of rDzogs chen must strive for. The idea of the 'Rainbow body' is compared by the dGe-lugs-pa critic dPal-mang dKon-mchog rgyal-mtshan (1764-1853) with the ancient Tibetan belief where the early kings returned bodily to heaven (*DTs*, f. 34b). This theory also contains echoes of the 'Luminous Body' of the Nāthasidda of Śaivism.

# King Tsa/Dza and Vajrayana

Buddhism in Tibet is known through two traditions, springing from tantric diffusion at different times in Tibetan history. Buddhist tantric texts of highly esoteric nature were first introduced during the reign of the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan (742-797).[1] The renowned *lo tsā ba* Vairocana is considered to be one of the first of the earliest Tibetan monks to touch upon tantrism in the eighth century A.D. A large number of tantras are said to have been translated by him, and are contained in *NyG*. Besides him there were other translators who followed and continued the work of translation right up to the second half of the ninth century A.D. Klong-chen rab-'byams (1308-1363) states that this first tradition came to an end with the translations of the *paṇḍita* Smṛti in the early eleventh century A.D.[2] It was this tradition that came to be known as *gsang sngags rnying ma* (the ancient secret spells). These names only came into use after a long interval when Lo-chen Rin-chen bzang-po (958-1055) and other translators came back to Tibet after having finished their studies in India, bringing with them freshly translated tantric works and new materials to make further translations. Translation work dating from his time was then naturally called *gsang sngags phyi 'gyur* (the later translation of secret spells) or *gsang sngags gsar ma* (the new secret spells). Therefore, those who maintain the earlier tradition are known as *rnying ma* (hence rNying-ma-pa) in contrast with those who uphold the later tradition, *gsar ma*, which covers all other schools, although this term is not often used.[3]

1. See n. 3.
2. *Theg pa mtha' dag gi don gsal bar byed pa grub mtha' rin po che'i mdzod (Grub mtha' mdzod)*, Gangtok n.d., f.141a.
3. *DR*, pp. 311-1-1; *DS*, p. 990. Several other explanations of the difference between the Old Tradition and New Tradition given by early Tibetans are recorded in *ChR* (on this work see note 30). Vol. II, f. 297: "Tantric texts which originate in and are translated from Vajrāsana are *gsar ma* and those from Oḍḍiyāna are *rnying ma*; those which are transmitted by Dākinī are *gsar ma* and those by Vidyādhara are *rnying ma;* if they expound the *catur-apramāna* (*tshad med pa bzhi*), the seven ...(?) and the transformation from the Vajradhara of Cause into Vajradhara of Result, they are *gsar ma*, if they expound *samādhi* and hold that the Vajradhara of Result is accomplished wthout going through the transformation they are *rnying ma*; those which are expounded by Vajradhara are *gsar ma* and those by Samantabhadra are *rnying ma*". The author of the *chos 'byung*, however, rejects these views and follows the usual explanation which we have already discussed.
Certain Tibetan historians also make a distinction between the *sngags rnying ma* of the Early Spread of Buddhism in Tibet (*bstan pa snga dar*), i.e. translations of tantras in the eighth century A.D., like the *Guhyasamāja* (see n.4), and the *sngags rnying ma* of the Later Spread (*phyi dar*). The latter is what is now known as rNying-ma-pa upholding the rDzogs chen doctrines. *Cf. PJ*, f. 41a.



However, the Old Tradition upholds a certain number of doctrines such as that of rDzogs chen which the New Tradition generally does not accept.[4] Despite the fact that Buddhism in Tibet has come to be known through the tantric tradition, its foundation is *vinaya*, the monastic code. The later Tibetan Buddhist historians therefore consider that Buddhism ceased to exist after the persecution of the monastic establishments in the ninth century A.D. However, tantric practice continued up until the re-establishment of monastic discipline in the eleventh century A.D.

Tantric teaching also twice came under restriction by royal orders, however. At the beginning of the ninth century A.D., when the king Khri lDe-srong-btsan (b. 776) gave orders (*bkas bcad*) to revise the Tibetan literary language, tantric terms were not to be collected and included in the *Mahāvyutpatti*[5] in spite of the fact that there were a number of tantras that had already been translated, mostly belonging to the groups of Kriyā and Caryā tantras. Again in the eleventh century, the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od, the king of Gu-ge, gave orders[6] to tantrists (*sngags pa*) to renounce their uncouth practices and adhere to monastic discipline. Religious practices described in this royal order are corroborated by a Dunhuang manuscript which I propose to study here. Its importance has not so far been noticed by Tibetologists. This seems to be the only Dunhuang manuscript that throws some light on the nature of the religious practices which got out of control during the dark period following the total break-down of central royal authority.

The Dunhuang manuscript to be studied is contained in *PT* 840.[7] It is the fourth section in the document which is reproduced here, and is found on the back of a scroll written between the lines of an incomplete section of the *Avataṁsakasūtra* in Chinese.[8] The section consists of eleven lines and is complete. It bears no relation either to the preceding three sections or to the incomplete passage that follows it. Therefore it is in fact a short and independent article. On the front of the scroll there is a short text concerned with a detailed instruction for the rite of *sgrol ba* of the *Mahāyoga* tantric teaching in eighty-five lines. It is complete. The fact that this tantric text is found on the same scroll suggests some connection between King Tsa and the Mahāyoga tantric teaching to which we shall return later.

4. See Article No.5, pp. 71-75.
5. *GBB*, p.73-4-6: *TD* p.146-5-3 p.148-3-4 (Lalou, 1953: 326-28).
6. See Article No.1.
7. M. Lalou (1939) describes the manuscript as follows: 'l rouleau (25 x 98) écrit à l'envers et entre les colonnes d'un texte chinois. Règl. et marges roses'.
8. *Daśabhūmikaparivarta*, T. 279, X: 108a2-c6. This informaiton I owe to Mr. Wu Chiyu.

The author of the article in the manuscript first makes eulogies to his country as high, pure and the source of many rivers. This is followed by a statement which identifies King Tsa with the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan. He is described as being of divine origin and in the lineage of a Bodhisattva. It is fairly certain that King Tsa was known to the author to be connected with the tantric tradition and therefore the reason for identifying him with Khri Srong-lde-btsan may have been an effort on the part of the author to glorify the latter's patronage of Buddhism in Tibet which is the main topic of the manuscript. On the other hand, this identification brings to mind the *gnod sbyin* Dza one of the three demon-like beings, but these according to one particular tradition are the progenitors of the first Tibetan king in another Dunhuang manuscript.[9] While the origin of the *gnod sbyin* Dza who is qualified as being the 'Master of the circle of Snowy Mountains' (*gangs ri byud gor gyi ni bdag po*) remains for the present obscure, King Tsa or Dza is widely known to different tantric traditions which we shall have occasion to discus. The author then continues by exalting Khri Srong-lde-btsan as the first king to introduce Buddhism into Tibet. This statement is in line with actual

9. *PT* No.1038 (Lalou, 1953). It has furhter been scrutinised by A. Macdonald (1971: 215).
Yoshiro Imaeda was kind enough to lend me a handwritten copy of the IOL No.380 (De la Vallée Poussin, 1962). It is a translation of a short section of chapter thirty-six of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalapatantra* corresponding more or less *K* Vol.6, No.162, p.264-3-7- p.264-4-2. It begins with a line running as follows: *ca zhes bya ba'i rgyal po zhig/.* De la Vallée Poussin noted it as: 'Story of a king named CA (vowel illegible) living in the Himalaya'. However, upon close examination of the manuscript itself, I could discern no vowel-indication or other mark above the syllable *CA*. The line corresponds to *yi ge ba ming rgyal por 'gyur/* of the Peking edition (Derge, Tōhoku 543 Vol. Na, f.338a7: *ba*; sNar-thang) rGyud Vol. Da, f.466b4: *nga* and the Sanskrit version has *pa* (Jayaswal, 1934: 65, Sanskrit text, p.61). *Pa* here stands for the king Pra[katāditya] of the Later Gupta dynasty. The IOL 380 simply begins from the middle of the section on this king.
The colophon of the manuscript 380 is as follows: *man dzu shri ṭan tra las/ tshigs bcad nyi tse/ bya gag lo la/ pho brang zung kar du zhu cen kyi lo tsa pa ban de dar mata shi las bsgyur pa rdzogs so/* — 'Some verses from the *Mañjuśrītantra.* Translated in the bird year at the Palace of Zung-kar by the Buddhist monk Dharmataśīla, the translator (who holds the position of) Editor'. This translator who has the title of *zhu chen gyi lo tsā ba* is no doubt the second of the two *bod kyi mkhan po* mentioned in the introduction to the *Mahāvyutpatti (T* Vol.144, No.5833, p.73-1-2), and so participated in the compilation of the dictionary around 914 A.D. The translation of a number of sutras is also recorded in his name (*K* Nos.760/47, 795, 827, 846, 879, 932).
Assuming the syllable in IOL 380 is *tsa* (which I think it is not) it might have a connection with King Tsa, but even so the context would hardly permit one to make such an interpretation, since the named king is explictly prophesied as being destined to become a king of Magadha, in India.



historical events, while other Dunhuang manuscripts[10] state that it was the king Srong-btsan sgam-po (d.649) who was the first patron of Buddhism, as in the later tradition.

The later Tibetan Buddhist historians maintain that the king Dar-ma (803-842) persecuted Buddhism and therefore they paint him as acting under 'demonic influence'. He is known under a nickname, Glang Dar-ma. There is no contemporary source for this nick-name. It is not attested in any of the Dunhuang documents, but we have a Dunhuang manuscript which, however paradoxical it might sound, contains statements entirely contrary to the later tradition. It emphatically states that Buddhism was in full swing in the Land of Snows from the time of the *lha sras* (i.e. descendant of the *phyva* gods) Dar-ma down to 'Od-srung and his descendants. This is all the more singular since it is certain that the document was written either towards the end of the ninth century or early in the tenth century, because it mentions the descendants (*dbon sras*) of 'Od-srung.[11]

The glorification of religious activities during Khri Srong-lde-btsan's reign and his criticism of the tantric practices of his own time suggest that the author was a purist in his approach to Buddhist practice. He admires the kind of practice common at the epoch of the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan and his immediate successors, when monastic discipline and tantric teachings were kept strictly separate both in theory and practice. Judging from the terminology and composition of his criticism the author is playing more with words than refuting from a logical and doctrinal basis. Terms he takes up, like *las kyi rdo rje* and *rdo rje rgyal po*, are rarely found in tantric texts as names of officiating priests in the impowerment ceremony (*abhiṣeka*).[12] The author's mention of the use of animals for obtaining masters can only be taken as mockery. Total submission on the part of a disciple to his master is prerequisite in tantric teachings. Offerings made to one's master of whatever one possesses as a fee for the *abhiṣeka* ceremony (*dbang yon*) have often in history included one's own horse and other domestic animals. Nevertheless, the criticism does suggest that there was economic strain on the community and other social difficulties brought about by excessive religious practices.

The story of King Tsa/Dza is an important element in the growth of the legend about the Vajrayāna. It was a great concern among Tibetan Buddhist historians to prove the validity of the tantric teachings, for they were the object of criticism time and again. Tantric literature has been the

10. Bacot *et al*, 1940: 118; Richardson, 1977: 228.
11. Dunhuang was taken back by the Chinese from the Tibetans in 849 A.D. (Demiéville, 1952: 206), but the activities of writing or copying out Buddhist texts in Tibetan evidently had continued after the recapture of the place.
12. See notes 61 and 65.

focus of investigation and polemic. The sūtras that have been accepted as authentic hardly suggest that the tantric teachings are the doctrines of the Buddha. The need to prove this was therefore extremely important. One of the most effective ways of solving this problem seems to have been the creation of prophetical lines containing allusions to the advent of the Vajrayāna and the names of its adepts in the distant future, and attributing these prophecies to the Buddha himself. There are several versions of such prophecies, quoted by different authors from various sources.

I. In the New Tradition (*gsar ma*), and particularly for those who follow the Yoga tantric teaching, such as the *Sarvatathāgata tattvasamgraha,*[13] King Tsa is a king of Za-hor (Bengal) in the East and his advent in the world is prophesied in a tantra entitled *dPal sdom pa 'byung ba'i rgyud phyi ma* in the following words:

"One hundred and twelve years
After I have gone from here,
The very essence of the doctrines,
Which is known in the three heavens,[14]
Will be revealed by Vajrapāṇi,
To King Tsa,
Through the harmonious blessing of compassion,
On a mountain called dPal.[15]
In the south-east of Jambudvīpa.
Those who are fortunate and good,
Will be made to realise Enlightenment.
Respect it [the teaching] for ever and ever."[16]

13. *K* Vol. 4, No.112.
14. See n.16.
15. Śrīparvata, a name of a mountain in Southern India where Nāgārjuna is said to have lived for some time; Tāranātha (b.1575), *bKa' babs bdun ldan brgyud pa'i rnam thar ngo mtshar rmad du byung ba rin po che'i khungs lta bu'i gtam* (*bKa' babs bdun ldan*), Derge edition, f. 6a. Atīśa states that the body of Nāgārjuna was still in his time on Śrīparvata: *dBu ma'i man ngag rin po che'i za ma tog kha phye ba, T* Vol.102, No.4325, p.64-3-8.
16. Bu-ston, *rNal 'byor rgyud kyi rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i gru gzings* (generally known as *Yo ga gru gzings*, also *gSang 'dus chos 'byung*). SPS Vol.51 (Part 11, Da), p.117:
*nga ni 'di nas mi snang nas/*
*lo ni brgya dang bcu gnyis nas*
*bstan pa'i snying po dam pa zhig/*
*lha gnas gsum du grags pa de/*
*'dzam gling shar lho'i phyogs mtshams na/*
*dpal zhes bya ba'i ri bo la/*
*thugs rjes mthun pa'i byin rlabs kyis/*
*rgyal po tsa zhes bya ba la/*
*lag na rdo rjes gnang ba byed/*
*mi la skal ldan dam pa rnams/*



This King Tsa is said to be one and the same as King Rab-gsal zla-ba (Prakāśacandra) who lived in the city of Pa ti kir ti in Bengal.[17] The tradition maintains that Vajrapāṇi caused himself to appear in the form of a *Vajradhātu maṇḍala* to this king and, having initiated him into the *maṇḍala*, transmitted to him the teaching of the *Saravatathāgatatattvasamgraha* and other tantras on Mt dPal. However, Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub states that he has seen neither the tantra itself containing the prophecy nor any authentic commentaries that quote from it.[18] But he suggests that the story of Indrabhūti of Zahor found in the *Sher phyin tshul brgya lnga bcu ba'i 'grel ba*[19] has more of a ring of truth, and in support of this he quotes the *Lam rnam par bkod pa* of Buddhaguhya.[20] Both the sources on which Bu-ston himself relies for his argument give no indication that Indrabhūti of Zahor is King Tsa, but this is not the point of his argument. His point is that the origins of the Yoga tantras may go back to Indrabhūti of Za-hor. Bu-ston, however, does not reach any conclusion as to whether the names King Tsa, Prakāśacandra and Indrabhūti and of Zahor are the names of one personage or several.[21] Here is a résumé of the story of Indrabhūti of Zahor found in the commentary[22] just referred to:

"Sometime after the *nirvāṇa* of the Buddha, Indrabhūti, the king of Zahor, and his entourage had strong faith in Buddhism and because of this they had become susceptible to conversion to Vajrayāna. Vajrapāṇi perceiving this went to Zahor with the eighteen great sūtra (*mdo sde chen po*) such as the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga* and the *Guhyasamāja.*[23] But when Indrabhūti began to look at the sūtras he

*byang chub mchog tu 'grub 'gyur bas/*
*de la rtag tu gus par byos/*
The three heavens (*lha gnas gsm*) are: Akaniṣṭha, Sumeruśikhara and Alakāvatī: *Yo ga gru gzings*, p.117. In his *sNgags kyi spyi don tshang dbyangs 'brug sgra* (*sNgags kyi spyi don*), Varanasi 1967, p.35, Klong-chen rab-'byams quoting from a tantra with a similar title states that this prophecy was given in reply to Mañjuśrī when he asked the Buddha just before the *nirvāṇa: bde bar gshegs pa'i bstan pa 'di kho na 'dug gam* — 'Is this all the doctrine of the Tathāgata?' *Cf.* wth the version of the prophecy found in *VD*, quoted in note 27.
17. *Yo ga gru gzings*, p.117; Tāranātha inclines to ascribe this king to around the seventh century A.D.: *Dam pa'i chos rin po che 'phags pa'i yul du ji ltar dar ba'i tshul gsal bar ston pa dgos 'dod kun 'byung)* (*rGya gar chos 'byung*). Varanasi 1971, pp.182, 203; Roerich, 1940: 752.
18. *Yo ga gru gzings*, p.118.
19. See n.22.
20. *T* Vol.83, No.4736, p.103-5-5.
21. *Yo ga gru gzings*, pp.117--121.
22. *'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa tshul brgya lnga bcu ba'i 'grel ba* (*T* Vol.77, No.3471, p.44-2-1). Accordng to Bu-ston this work was translated into Tibetan in the eighth century; *Yo ga gru gzings*, p.140.
23. For the eighteen tantras, *cf.* note 30.

could not understand them, he searched for someone who could. There was in the country of Malava in Magadha an *ācārya* called Kukurāja (Kukkurarāja, Khyi'i rgyal-po)[24] who was preaching to one thousand dogs by day and by night giving enjoyment to the dogs. A messenger was sent to this master to tell him to come and look at the sūtras, but he wanted them to bring the books to him. He too failed to understand them at first, but after saying prayers, Vajrasattva appeared to him and so the master was able to comprehend the instructions contained in the books. He then went to Za-hor and preached them to Indrabhūti."[25]

II. However, according to the rNying-ma-pa, King Tsa mentioned in the prophecy quoted above is not Tsa, but Dza.[26] Indeed, the works that I have so far consulted always have the second orthography, and according to them King Dza's coming was prophesied by the Buddha. The prophecy, which is in fact simply a variation of the lines quoted above, is found in *VD*.[27] Although its source is not mentioned, an elaborated story of King Dza is given. Much of this is similar to the story of Indrabhūti of Za-hor given earlier, but some points differ:

King Dza had different dreams each night for seven successive nights and on the last, in his dream a ran of volumes and images fell on

24. This personage is also known as Kukuripa and to him is attributed the introdction of Mahāmāyā texts from Oḍḍiyāna into India: Atīśa, *op. cit.*, p. 65-5; bSod-nams rtse-mo (1142-1182), *rGuyd sde spyi rnam* (*SK*, Vol.1, No.1, p.29-2); Tāranātha, *rGya gar chos 'byung*, p. 247; Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho (1813-99), *Shes bya kun khyab* (SPS Vol. 80, Delhi 1970, Vol.I, p.416). However, the rNying-ma-pa tradition knows two Kukurāja one earlier than the other; *VD*, f.29a,b.(see note 27).

25. Thsi story is also quoted by Bu-ston, *Yo ga gru gzings*, p.119.

26. *Yo ga gru gzings*, pp.118-19; However, the same prophecy quoted in *rGyud sde spyi rnam* (p.28-2-2) by bSod-nams rtse-mo has the orthography *dza*. The account of King Dza given by him is a curious mixture of the Yoga tantric teaching and rNying-ma-pa tradition. It only becomes clear in *Yo ga gru gzings*, p. 578 *et seq.* *tsa* and *dza* are the syllables used alternatively by the Tibetans to transliterate the *ja* of the Indic languages, e.g. *rā dza* or *rā tsa*. Since it is a name of a king there may be some connection between the name and *rāja*.

27. *VD*, f.7a:
*nga ni 'di nas mi snang nas/*
*lo ni brgya dang bcu gnyis na/*
*lha gnas gsum du grags pa yi/*
*bstan pa'i snying po dam pa zhig/*
*'dzam gling,shar lho'i phyogs mtshams su/*
*mi las skal ldan rigs can de/*
*rgyal po dza zhes bya ba 'byung/*
*sngon du ltas rnams 'byung 'gyur te/*
*drag shul can zhes bya ba'i rtser/*
*grogs kyi sems can dman pa'i lus/*
*lang ka'i bdag po la sogs la/*
*lag na rdo rjes ston par 'gyur/*



the roof of his castle. The next day when he went up to the roof he found many volumes of manuscripts and an image of Vajrāpāṇi, but on trying to read them he was unable to understand. He looked for someone who might be able to help, but the search proved futile. Thereupon he imagined that this must be because of his own defilement and set out to purify himself. After a while he was able to understand the *sādhana* of Vajrasattva (*rDo rje sems dpa'i sgrub thabs*) and especially the chapter entitled *rDo rje sems dpa'i zhal mthong gi le'u*[28] among the manuscripts. Eventually in a vision he saw Vajrasattva, who gave him impowerment(*dbang*), and thus the king was able to comprehend all the teachings contained in the manuscripts.

*ChR*[29] basing itself on *VD*, develops the story of King Dza further. It states that King Dza could understand the manuscripts, but

28. These are chapters 16 and 31 respectively of the *sGyu 'phrul le lhag* (*NyG* Vol. Pha, pp.439-442; 534-537).

29. The recent printing of this work (Delhi 1975) has two titles: *Chos 'byung rin po che'i gter mdzod* and *Thub bstan gsal bar byed pa'i nyi 'od*. This would seem to be the one generaly known as *Klong chen chos 'byung*, as is indicated on the cover of the new print. In the list of works of Klong-chen rab-'byams (1308-1363) a *chos 'byung* is included in the *rNying rgyud dkar chag* (*NyG* Vol.34, f.270) of 'Jigs-med gling-pa (1730-1798), and this is noted by G.N. Roerich (1988: 200). 'Gyur-med tshe-dbang mchog-grub also gives a *Chos 'byung rin po che'i gter mdzod* among the works of Klong-chen rab-'byams (*rNying rgyud rtogs brjod*, composed in 1797), *NyG* Vol. 35, f. 552. In the list of historical works given in *Deb ther ryga mtsho* (Delhi, n.d., p.7), dKon-mchog bstan-pa rab-rgyas (b.1801) also mentions a *Klong chen chos 'byung*. All these probably refer to the work in hand which is signed with the name rGyal-sras Thugs-mchog-rtsal (Vol.II, f.473). An interlinear note informs us: *klong chen rab 'byams bsam yas pa*. The note therefore identifies this signature as being a name of Klong-chen rab-'byams (1308-1363). However, this name is not to be found among those which Klong-chen rab-'byams himself gives with explanations for using different names in his *Chos dbyings mdzod kyi 'grel ba lung gi gter mdzod* (Gangtok, n.d., f.208b) nor in his *Grub mtha' mdzod* (f.204a) where he has listed eleven names which he had used. If the identificaiton made by the interlinear note that the author of the *chos 'byung* was Klong-chen rab-'byams is accepted, then the work was completed in 1362 (water-tiger, Vol.11, f.473), i.e. the year just before he died. This is in line with the date 1359, in which year he was in the process of writing it (Vol. II, f.385): *da lta...sa mo phag steng na yod pas/* — 'now we are in the year earth-pig (1359)', but on folio 394 (Vol. II) it states: *de nas da bar bzhi bcu gcig/ sa bya zhi ba'i lo 'dis 'das/* — 'from the up till now forty-one years have elapsed by this year earth-bird (*zhi ba*)'. The earth-bird then has to be 1369, which is however six years after the death of the author. As it is outside the scope of the present article to go into detail about the chronological section of the work I must stop at this point, but considering the literary style and the structure of the work, it is a little out of Klong-chen rab-'byams's line. Some more solid evidence must be brought to prove that Klong-chen rab-'byams is the author of this important work. However, a *chos 'byung* entitled *Shes rab gsal byed* is mentoned in the list of his works by Chos-grags bzang-po, a prominent disciple of Klong-chen rab-'byams (*Kun mkhyen dri med 'od zer gyi rnam*

pretended not to for the sake of avoiding interpolation. After looking for someone, he came across Kukurāja who recognised that the manuscripts were about the *sGyu 'phrul dra ba stong phrag brgya ba'i rgyud*. At once he set himself to practise meditation on Vajrasattva, who appeared to him after seven months in a vision and told him that it was Vajrapāṇi who should preach to him. So he continued his practice for a further seven months and Vajrapāṇi appeared and gave him initiation. Kukurāja then grouped the tantras into eighteen divisions[30] and preached them to King Dza.[31]

According to *ChR* the prophecy was given in reply to a question asked of the Buddha just before his *nirvāṇa* by the *vidyādhara* Kuñjara in the following words:

"Although there are innumerable excellent methods,
In taking up the practice in which nothing is accepted or rejected,
You have not preached at all the way in which one does not look for enlightenment elsewhere,
Or that which is really the great way?"[32]

The source for these lines and those of the prophecy is given as the *gDams ngag 'bogs pa'i rgyal po* (hereafter *gDams ngag*).[33] However, in the *rGyud sde spyi rnam* Bu-ston cites a different passage instead of the prophecy in reply to a similar question also from the *gDams ngag*.[34] This

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*thar mthong ba don ldan*, in *Vima snying tig*, Vol.9, Part 3, New Delhi 1970, No.9 (Tsa), p.79).

30. These are the eighteen Mahāyoga tantric texts of the rNying-ma-pa tradition. The most important of these is the *gSang ba snying po* (*K* Vol.10, No.455; *NyG* Vol.14), a condensed form of all Mahāmāyā tantra, *cf.* Article No.1, p. 7. It has been the most controversial tantra in Tibetan religious history. For the eighteen texts see *Klong chen chos 'byung*, Vol. 1, f. 378; *sNgags kyi spyi don*, p. 27.
31. In his *sNgags kyi spyi don*, however, Klong-chen rab-'byams rejects this version of the story. According to him it was King Dza who preached to Kukurāja (pp.24-35).
32. Vol.I, f.361:
*mnyam nyid blang dor med spyod cing/*
*thabs mchog dpag gi (sic) mi long yang/*
*byang chub gzhan (nas) mi 'tshol ba'am/*
*nges pa'i theg chen yongs ma gsungs/*
*Cf.* n.42.
33. Vol.I, f.362. If Klong-chen rab-'byams is the author of the *Klong chen chos 'byung*, it is curious to note that he maintains that this work is source of the prophecy (Vol. I, f.362). At any rate, he does give the correct source, the *dGongs 'dus*, in his *Grub mtha' mdzod* (f.280). On the other hand, he prefers not to mention any source at all for the prophecy in his *sNgags kyi spyi don* (pp. 24-35).
34. *rGyud sde spyi yi rnam par bzhag pa rgyud sde rin po che'i mdzes rgyan* (*rGyud sde spyi rnam*), Part 15 Ba, p.127: *rdo rje theg pa sangs rgyas kyi gsung yin par phyi mtshan nyid kyi lung grub ste/ mdo sde gdams ngag 'bogs pa'i rgyal po las/*
*'dren pa'i theg pa gsum po dag/*
*bcom ldan nges par gsung lags na/*
*rgyu 'bras lhun grub tu spyod cing/*



sūtra, according to some rNying-ma-pa, is the same as the *dGongs 'dus* of which we shall have something to say below. *ChR* also goes on to quote the prophecy, with some variants, from the *dPal sdom pa 'byung ba'i rgyud phyi ma*, which we have already discussed, in support of the story of King Dza, but leaving out the line *rgyal po tsa zhes bya ba 'byung*.[35] It is curious to say the least that this line is omitted. Was it because the line contains the orthgraphy Tsa?[36] However, the text does take the trouble to clarify that it was on the top of the cave Asura in Za-hor in the East where King Dza received all the volumes of manuscripts in the form of rain twenty-eight years after the death of the Buddha.[37] The *chos 'byung* therefore admits by implication that King Dza is the same as King Tsa of the Yoga tantric tradition.

In his *Grub mtha' mdzod*,[38] Klong-chen rab-'byams gives the source of the prophecy concerning King Dza as the *dGongs pa lung ston*. This vague title becomes a little clearer when Sog-zlog-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1552-1624) gives it as *rNying ma'i mdo dgongs pa lung ston*.[39] Even then it is not the correct title of the work, but only a reference to a chapter containing prophecies of the *Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo* (*dGongs 'dus*), where the prophecy can be spotted.[40]

In order to maintain the authenticity of the *dGons 'dus* certain rNying-ma-pa authors assert that it is one and the same as the *gDams*

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*sangs rgyas gzhan nas mi tshol ba'i/*
*nges pa'i theg pa cis ma gsungs/ zhes zhus pa dang/*
*rgyu la mos pa rgyu chos kyi/*
*'khor lo rab tu bskor byas nas/*
*rdo rje theg pa nye lam zhig/*
*ma 'ongs dus na 'byung bar 'gyur/*
*Cf.* n.42. For an English translation of these lines, see G. N. Roerich, 1988: 158. Roerich translates the reply as: 'When thus asked, the Buddha replied to those who believed in the Doctrine of Cause: "After I had revolved the Wheel ..." '. This should rather be: 'When thus asked, the Buddha replied: "The Wheel for the law of Cause for those who believed in the Doctrne of Cause having turned by me, the short road of Vajrayāna will appear in the future"'.

35. *ChR*, Vol.I, f.363.
36. However, the line is included in the prophecy quoted in the *sNgags kyi spyi don* with the orthography *DZA*, p.36.
37. *ChR*, Vol.I, f.367.
38. f.280.
39. *LRB*, p.15.
40. *De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi thus gsang ba'i ye shes don gyi snying po rdo rje bkod pa'i rgyud rnal 'byor grub pa'i lung kun 'dus rig pa'i mdo theg pa chen po mngon par rtogs pa chos kyi rnam grangs rnam par bkod pa zhes bya ba'i mdo* (*K* Vol.9, No.452, p.170-1-1). A commentary on this tantra, known as *sPyi mdo'i 'grel ba lung bstan ma*, is even attributed to King Dza, see Fifth Dalai Lama, *'Jig rten gsum gyi bde skyid pad tshal 'byed pa'i nyin byed* (colophon title), *T* Vol. 151, *dkar chag* II, p. 99-2-8. On this *dkar chag* also see Vostrikov, 1970: 214. On the *dGongs 'dus* one may also consult Stein, 1971-72: 501-2.

*ngag*.[41] However, this assertion is based on a comparison made between two identical passages by 'Gos gZhon-nu-dpal (1392-1481), who simply writes to the effect that the passage quoted by Bu-ston from the *gDams ngag* seems to be identical in content to that of *dGongs 'dus*.[42] This is far from saying the two works are the same. Bu-ston uses the sūtra *gDams ngag* in order to demonstrate the validity of Vajrayāna as being a teaching of Gautama Śākyamuni.[43] It is therefore obvious that he considers the sūtra authentic, but it is not to be found under this title in the catalogue of *K* in his *chos 'byung*. *dGongs 'dus*, on the other hand, is considered to be primarily a tantric work in spite of the word *mdo* in its title. Moreover, it is one of the five basic tantras of the Anuyoga tantric teaching of the rNying-ma-pa tradition.[44] The copy of this tantra in *K* (Peking edition) bears a fantastically long title[45] which does not contain, however, the more usual title: *Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo*, though the work is to be found under this title in *NyG*.[46] The passage quoted by Bu-ston from the *gDams ngag* and the similar passage quoted in *ChR* which is said to have the same source but is found in the *dGongs 'dus*,[47] as well as the fact that the passages are almost identical, all do suggest a strong possibility of the existence either of different translations or recensions, or that both tantras bore the title *gDams ngag* as well as *dGongs 'dus*. However, it is far from certain whether the two books are identical, for no work under the title *gDams ngag* is yet available to be consulted. Nevertheless, the translation or composition in its present form of the *dGongs 'dus* certainly goes back to the tenth century A.D. and possibly even beyond. It is said to have been translated

41. *NgD*, p.280:
*dgongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo zhes pa/*
*mdo sde gdams ngag 'bogs pa'i rgyal/*
*yin par smra yis (sic) sgrub pa yis (sic)/*
*'gos lo yid bzang rtse bas sgrub/*
And so the author of *ChR*.
42. *DNg*, Ga, f.25b: *..ma 'ongs dus na 'byung bar 'gyur zhes drang ba de yang mdo*
*dgongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo nyid na/*
*'dren pa'i theg pa rnam gsum la/*
*gang dag rim par bkod lags na/*
*mnyam pas blang dor med spyod cing/*
*byang chub gzhan nas mi tshol ba'i/*
*thabs mchog dpag gis mi lang ba'i/*
*nges pa'i theg pa yong ma gsungs/*
*shes 'byung ba de yin par snang ste/...*
*Cf. dGongs 'dus*, p.128-1-1.
43. See n.34.
44. *NgD*, p.468.
45. See n.40.
46. Vol. Da.
47. *dGongs 'dus*, p.128-1-1.



from the language of Bru-sha. This tantra is among those of doubtful origin in the *bka' shog* of Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od. It is therefore the oldest source containing the prophecy. The existence of the tantra, from which the prophecy concerning King Tsa of the adepts of the Yoga tantric tradition is quoted, is not attested at this epoch, i.e. the ninth or tenth centuries, except that the orthography *tsa* agrees with our Dunhuang manuscript.

As we have seen, the story of King Dza in the rNying-ma-pa tradition is not much different from the story of King Tsa in the Yoga tantric tradition, and differs still less from the story of Indrabhūti of Za-hor which is probably the original source of the legend of King Tsa/Dza. However, neither *VD* nor *ChR* is explicit as to whether King Dza is identifiable with Indrabhūti of Za-hor in spite of the fact that it is clear that their story is modelled on that of Indrabhūti of Za-hor.

III. In about the fourteenth century, the rNying-ma-pa embarked upon a path which resulted in considerable confusion. In the *Padma thang yig*,[48] O-rgyan gling-pa (b 1323) hesitates as to whether King Dza ought to be identified with Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna in the west. He simply states that when Indrabhūti said prayers to his 'wishing jewel', the rain of the eighteen groups of tantras fell upon the top of the palace of King Dza, but in the *rGyal po bka' thang*,[49] he abruptly declares the two names to be the names of one person: *rgyal po dza zhes in dra bhu ti yin/* (i.e. King Dza is Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna). He then gives a résumé of the story of King Dza which is only a variation of the one found in the *Sher phyin tshul brgya lnga bcu ba'i 'grel ba*.[50] O-rgyan gling-pa then tries to avoid the problem of identification of King Dza, whose advent in the east is prophesied in the *dGongs 'dus* with Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna in the west. This he does by giving a list of adepts through whom the teaching of the eighteen tantras was transmitted from Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna to Indrabhūti of Za-hor.[51] It is certain however that he was not the first to try and identify King Dza with Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna. He simply amplifies a tradition the existence of which is attested in the twelfth century A.D.[52] It probably goes back further still. His desire to amplify the identification was probably prompted by the fact that Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna is an important personage in tantric development. Moreover, his appearance is explicitly prophesied in the authentically accepted tantras of the New Tradition, such

48. Edition Derge, f.35a-36b.
49. Edition Zhol par-khang, f.24b.
50. See n.22.
51. *rGyal po bka' thang*, f.25a.
52. bSod-nams rtse-mo, *rGyud sde spyi rnam*, p.28-2-2.

as the *Śrītattvapradipa*.[53] Some of the later rNying-ma-pa historians have accepted the identification without any question,[54] but 'Gyur-med tshe-dbang mchog-grub has certain reservations: 'Some have identified the king called Dza with the first Indrabhūti who obtained *abhiṣeka* directly from the Buddha;[55] some with the son of the first Indrabhūti and others with the second Indrabhūti. However, if worked out chronologically he is said to be a contemporary of Kukurāja. So it would seem that he is to be identified with the second Indrabhūti'.[56] This author is therefore inclined to accept the identification of King Dza with Indrabhūti of Za-hor in the East, as in *ChR*.[57] This would narrow down the wide contradiction and bring it into line with the prophecy in the *dGongs 'dus*.

Finally the story of King Dza is also retold in the *Lo rgyus chen mo* section of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*, with only a few minor changes to suit its own purpose.[58]

53. *K* Vol.2, No.15, p.25-3-8.
54. Ratna glin-pa (1403-1478), *Chos 'byung bstan pa'i sgron me rtsod zlog seng ge nga ro*, Palampur 1970, p. 68; Tshe-dbang nor-bu (1698-1755), *gSang chen rdo rje theg mchog bsgrub pa bka' brgyad kyi lo rgyas rab sdus sa bon tsam du smos pa legs bshad bum bzang*, Collected Works, Delhi 1977, Vol.V, p.467.
55. Here the author alludes to the adepts of the *Guhyasamāja* (*gSang 'dus*) who uphold this tradition; Bu-ston, *bDe mchog spyi don rnam gsal* (*bDe mchog chos 'byung*), Collected Works, Part 6 Cha, p.71.
56. *rNying rgyud rtogs brjod* (*NyG* Vol.35). f.337: *de yang rgyal po dza zhes pa 'ga' zhig gis ston pa dngos kyi dbang bskur thob pa'i in dra bhu ti chen po la byed pa dang/ kha cig gis de nyid kyi sras yin par yang byed/ 'ga' zhig gis in dra bhu ti bar ba la 'dod pa sogs mi 'dra bar byung ba.../ 'on kyang dus dang bstun na slob dpon ku ku rā dza dang dus mtshungs su bshad pas de ltar in dra bhu ti bar ba la byed dgos pa'dra zhing..'*.
In his *rNying ma'i chos 'byung lha dbang g.yu las rgyal ba'i rnga bo che'i sgra dbyangs* (Kalimpong 1967), bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral ye-shes rdo-rje has copied out the whole long section including the passage just quoted from the above work of 'Gyur-med tshe-dbang mchog-grub without making any reference to the source. His borrowing of pasages from Ratna glin-pa's *chos 'byung* has already been noted by A.-M. Blondeau (1975-76: 111).
57. Tibetan Buddhist tradition knows several personages with the same name. Bu-ston speaks of three Indrabhūti, *Yo ga gru gzings*, p.121, but does not elucidate the point. In his *bKa' babs bdun ldan* Tāranātha gives a short account of Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna (f. 16a), and says that little is known about the second Indrabhūti, f.20a). According to G. Tucci (1949: 212), Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna lived at the end of the seventh century A.D. Presumaly he meant the first one. On the other hand, A. Wayman (1973: 14-19) ascribes Indrabhūti the great (of Oḍḍiyāna?) to the fourth century and another one to the first half of the ninth century A.D. We may deduce the three Indrabhuti from the discussion of 'Gyur-med tshe-dbang mchog-grub (see n.56) as follows: 1. Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna, 2. Indrabhūti of Zahor, 3. a son of the first by the same name.
58. Edition Zhol par khang, f.46a,b. In the story, Avalokiteśvara takes the place of Vajrasttva and a certain *sPyan ras gzigs gsung gi rgyud* and its chapter *Zhal ston gyi le'u* are substituted for the *rDo rje sems dpa'i sgrub thabs* and *rDo rje sems dpa'i zhal mthong gi le'u*: *cf.* n.28.



As we have noted, the Yoga tantric tradition in Tibet identified King Tsa with Bengali king known as Prakāśacandra. Bu-ston was unable to find the tantra *dPal sdom pa 'byung ba'i rgud phyi ma* containing the prophecy concerned with King Tsa, nor could he trace any quotation from this tantra in the authentic commentaries. He therefore preferred the story of Indrabhūti of Za-hor as the most likely origin of the Yoga tantric tradition. On the other hand, the rNying-ma-pa before the fourteenth century asserted that the King Tsa of the Yoga tantric tradition should be corrected to the orthography *Dza*, as it appears in the *dGongs 'dus*. They therefore implicitly admitted that the origin of their Mahāyoga tantric tradition is the same as that of the Yoga tantric teaching of the New Tradition. From about the fourteenth century onwards, however, the rNying-ma-pa restored an old claim in which King Dza was identified with Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna. In any case, since the tantric texts mentioning King Tsa/Dza are controversial works and their genuine Indian origin is doubted, this legendary figure was probably a Tibetan creation, as is palpable in our Dunhuang manuscript. Just as the later Buddhist tradition made the first Tibetan king an Indian, in the same way it also desired to connect King Tsa/Dza with the land which gave birth to Buddhism.



*Plate 6: Inscription, above: Khri Dar-ma 'o-dum-tsan (=Glang Dar-ma). Inscription, below: 'Od-srungs (= 'Od-srung). Gyantse Kubum (SGK 1987)*

**Translation of the Tibetan text**

Tibet is high and its land is pure.
Its snowy mountains are the nape of all,

The source of innumerable rivers and streams.[59]
In this centre of the sphere of solemn deities.
There is the king called Tsa,
Born in the *lha* [60] family and in the lineage of the Bodhisattva,
The *lha sras* Khri Srong-lde-btsan.
He introduced holy Buddhism and invited masters from India,
Like a lamp in the middle of darkness.
He caused it to be practised by all in the whole of his kingdom,
Led them forward on the path of sublime Englightenment.
How great it was, the kindness of the Lord, the Divine Son!

When they were in accord with the teaching of the authoritative word,
The masters of the exoteric and esoteric teachings,
And the learned *las kyi rdo rje* [61] all three,
Did not confuse their practices in such a way!
Then there was no conflict when the learned and noble practised the teaching wisely.
So all the people of Tibet were well and happy.

From the time of the descendant of the gods, Dar-ma,
Down to 'Od-srung and his descendants,
In general, holy Buddhism gaines much ground and spreads.
It flourishes so much and even excessively,
So that everyone, who is born human, aspires to practise it.

Without knowing the three vows[62] and monastic rules.
One buys a *vajra* master with a donkey.
Without possessing the right impowerment.[63]

59. Similar eulogy of Tibet as being the pure, high land, centre of snowy mountains and source of many rivers, occurs in other Dunhuang manuscripts and on an inscription: Bacot *et al.*, 1940: 81; IOL No.75, f.36a; *PT* 1290, verso (Macdonald, 1971: 335); Richardson, 1952: 55.
60. The *lha* here stands for the Phyva gods, *cf.* Article No. 16.
61. This refers to the *las kyi slob dpon*, who is the third in importance among the officiating masters in the impowerment ceremony, the first being *rdo rje slob dpon* and the second *rdo rje rgyal tshab* (see n.64). His qualifications are described in the *dPal ye shes snyin po zhes bya ba rnal 'byor ma chen mo'i rgyud* (*K* Vol.2, No.13, p.4-1-4). Four types of impowerment bestowed by *las kyi rdo rje* are given in *PT* 42 (*verso*).
62. This refers to the three vows (*sdom pa gsum*), i.e. the monastic, bodhisattva and tantric vows.
63. The expression *'dren pa'i slob dpon* does not occur very often in other texts. *PT* 42 (*verso*) has a similar phrase: *'dren pa'i gshes gnyen* who performs five types of impowerment ceremony.



One buys a master to guide[64] with an ox.
Without possessing the guide's[65] impowerment
One buys a *vajra* master's assistant[66] with a horse.
Without even possessing the impowerment from a *vajra* assistant,[67]
One buys a *vajra* king[68] with a *btson.*[69]

A master who takes no account of the prescribed signs[70] and levels,
Lost in mistaken directions,
Does not comprehend the sense of that which is beyond the world.
For one hundred disciples there are one thousand masters.
So there is no one who lends his ear to Buddhism.
There are ten masters in every village.
There is no limit of the number of *vajra* masters.
Everyone expects to succeed in realising the tutelary deity.
In the end, will the many groups not destroy the *vajra* body?

**Transliteration of the Tibetan text.**

(1.1)/yul mtho sa gtshang[1] bod kyi yul/
/gangs ri mtho gtshang[2] kun kyi[3] gnya'[4]/
/chu bo klung yas kun kyi[5] mgo/
/lha gnyan yul dbyings[6] dkyil 'di (1.2) na/
/rgyal po tsa zhes bya ba de/
/lha'i rigs la byang cub[7] sems dpa'i rgyu[8]/

64. See n. 67.
65. In the rNyin-ma-pa tradition, *rdo rje rgyal tshab* is the one who performs the impowerment ceremony, but the correctness of his function is questioned by those who uphold the New Tradition; *LRB*, p.51.
66. See n.69.
67. This is another phrase for *rdo rje slob dpon*, see *Ye shes thig le'i rgyud*, *K* Vol, No.14, p.18-3-8: *de lta'i dpal bla rdo rje rgyal po nyid/* See also *PT* 837, line 136 (Hackin, 1924: 14, 37).
68. *las kyi dbang (= las kyi rdo rje'i dbang), 'dren pa'i dbang (= 'dren pa'i bshes gnyen gyi dbang* and *rgyal tshab dbang* refer to certain types of tantric initiation which were evidently in practice in the author's time (see notes 61 and 63).
69. It certainly refers to an animal here as in the three previous cases: donkey, ox and horse, but as an animal it is not known. The normal meaning 'prison' has no relevance here.
70. *drod* generally refers to signs of success in practising meditation according to a particular *sādhana*. *PT* 42 (*verso*) defines it as follows: *drod ces bgyi ba ni sbyor ba dang sgrol ba dang/ zas kyi tshogs gsum gyi sems 'phang dang/ nus pa'i mthu nyams kyi rtags la bgyi ba lags ste/* — *drod* means the signs of courage and effect of the ability in (performing) 'sexual union' and 'deliverance' and the rite of 'assemblage of food'. The manuscript then explains three kinds of *drod* for each of *sbyor, sgrol* and *zas kyi tshogs*. Also *cf. sGom gyi gnad gsal bar phye ba bsam gtan mig sgron*, Smnrtsis shesrig spendzod Series, Vol. 74, Leh 1974, pp.252, 464.

/lha sras khri srong lde btsan gyis/
/dam chos slobs[9] dpon rgya gar (1.3) yul nas spyan drangs te/[10]
/mun nag dkyil du sgron bteg bzhin/
/rgyal khams phyogs kyang spyod par gnang/
/byang cub[11] mchog gi lam (1.4) la bkod/
/lha sras lha'i drin re che/
/bka'[12] lung gzhung dang 'thun[13] pa'i tshe/
/phyi nang gnyis kyi slobs[14] dpon dang/
/las kyi rdo rje mkhas dang (1.5) gsum/
/ma 'dres spyod lam 'di lta bu/
/mkhas btsun spyod mkhas 'khrug pa med/
/bod 'bangs kun kyang bde zhing skyid/

/lha sras (1.6) dar ma man cad[15] dang/
/'od srus[16] dbon sras man cad[17] du/
/spyi ni dam chos dar cing[18] rgyas/
/ha chang[19] dar cing[20] rgyas ces[21] pas/
/myir[22] skyes kun kyang 'gru (1.7)b par bzhed/
/gsum khrims 'dul khrims myi[23] shes par/
/las kyi rdo rje bong bus nyo/
/las kyi dbang dang myi[24] ldan (1.8) bar[25]/
/'dren pa'i slobs[26] dpon glang gis nyo/
/'dren pa'i dbang dang myi[27] ldan bar[28]/
/rdo rje rgyal 'tshab[29] rta'is[30] nyo/
/rgyal 'tshab[31] dbang dang (1.9) myi[32] ldan bar[33]/
/rdo rje rgyal po btson gyis nyo/

/drod dang tshod dang ma sbyar ba'i/
/nor kar bor ba'i slobs[34] dpon gyis/
/'jig rten 'das pa'i don (1.10) myi[35] rig/
/slob ma brgya la slobs[36] dpon bcu/
/lha chos nyan pa'i myi[37] ma mchis/
/grong tsan[38] gcig la slobs[39] dpon bcu/
/las kyi rdo rje (1.11) gras[40] kyang myed[41]/
/kun kyang lha ru 'grub snyam ste/
/mjug du sde tsan[42] mang po yis/
/rdo rje phung po bshig ga re//

The following notes are simply to indicate the modern spellings and not corrections, except in a few places where the scribe has left out some syllables and commited errors.



1 gtsang. 2 gtsang. 3 gyi. 4 gnya'. 5 gyi. 6 PT 1290: lha gnas yul dbyig.../ 7 chub. 8 This should be brgyud. 9 slob. 10 In this line there are four extra syllables. It is possible that three syllables were missed out just after the word dpon by the scribe. 11 chub. 12 bka'. 13 mthun. 14 slob. 15 chad. 16 srung. 17 This is an error. It should be yan chad. 18 zhing. 19 cang. 20 zhing. 21 ches. 22 mir. 23 mi. 24 mi. 25 par. 26 slob. 27 mi. 28 par. 29 tshab. 30 yis. 31 tshab. 32 mi. 33 par. 34 slob. 35 mi. 36 slob. 37 mi. 38 tshan. 39 slob. 40 grangs. 41 med. 42 tshan.



*Plate 7: PT 840. Photo Courtesy of the Bbliotheque nationale, Paris.*

# rDzogs chen in its Earliest Text: a Manuscript from Dunhuang

It is well known that the doctrine of rDzogs chen is the counterpart to early Ch'an in China and to Zen in Japan, both the latter names being ultimately derived from the Sanskrit term *dhyāna* (Tib. *bsam gtan*). In Tibet itself rDzogs chen was the most important of the teachings adhered to by both Buddhists, particularly the rNying-ma-pa and later certain other schools, as well as by the non-Buddhist Bonpo. It has been a controversial doctrine ever since the tenth century, not merely because of the obscurity surrounding its origin, but also because of doubts as to whether it is an authentic Buddhist teaching at all. Nonetheless, its adherents consider it to be very special: whether they live as monks or as laymen, they always consider themselves as adherents of this philosophical doctrine. It is, however, incorrect to assume that it is a subsect of the rNying-ma-pa that is being referred to whenever the expression rDzogs-chen-pa crops up. That term in fact is hardly ever used to designate the adherents of the rDzogs chen doctrine *per se*, but is most often used to speak of the monks coming from the rDzogs-chen monastery in Khams, founded only in 1685.[1]

From the latter half of the ninth century onwards we know of texts specially devoted to the doctrine of rDzogs chen, and the activity of writing treatises on the teaching continued throughout the centuries. By the age of Ratna gling-pa (1403-1478) the number of such works, usually designated as *rgyud*, ran into the hundreds. Most of these are excluded from the *Kanjur* and *Tanjur*. As a consequence we have instead the independent and imposing collection known as the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, of which the first ten volumes contain works on rDzogs chen. Yet this collection, in turn, does not include numerous works by the great masters of the tradition which are devoted to that teaching for example those of gNubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes (late tenth century),[2] Rong-zom

1. The full name is Ru-dam rdzogs-chen o-rgyan bsam-gtan chos-gling, founded by Padma rig-'dzin (1625-1697).
2. The dates of this master are very uncertain. However, he is in all probability the author of the *sGom gyi gnad gsal bar phye ba bsam gtan mig sgron (bSam gtan mig sgron)*, Smanrtsis shesring spendzod series, vol. 74 (Leh, 1974). In this work a clear reference is made to King Glang Dar-ma (803-842). Also one gets the impression that the text was composed a long time after the death of the king. In his *DNg* (Roerich, 1949: 108,), 'Gos gZon-nu-dpal (1392-1481) states that gNubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes was active during the reign of King bKra-shis brtsegs-pa-dpal (ca. early 10th century). This seems to accord with the tradition that Mi-la-ras-pa (1040-1123)



*paṇḍita* Chos-kyi bzang-po (mid-eleventh century), and Klong-chen rab-'byams (1308-1363). The Bonpo, likewise, have produced no less work on the same teaching.

If one aspect of Tibetan civilization is better known than all the others it is Tibetan Buddhism, but even within this domain the rDzogs chen is still a vast unmapped territory which only a few have begun to explore, Prof. Tucci having been the first to touch upon it.[3] Certain orthodox Buddhist schools like the Sa-skya-pa and some sub-schools of the bKa'-brgyud-pa, e.g., the Bri-gung bka'-brgyud-pa, took the view that rDzogs chen was simply a resurrection of the Ch'an doctrine, which was banned from Tibet in the eighth century. Even some rNying-ma-pa authors, for example O-rgyan gling-pa (1329-1367), literally accepted this view. The latter went to the extent of making Hva-shang Mahāyāna a tantrist in his *Blon po bka' thang*.[4] We now know that this Chinese monk was summoned to Tibet in 787 from Dunhuang, which was then under Tibetan rule, by the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan (742-797). In Tibet he preached the form of Chinese Buddhism known as Ch'an, which was strongly influenced by Taoism.[5] Later he was expelled from Tibet and returned to Dunhuang. In the light of the available Dunhuang manuscripts on the subject of Dhyāna teaching, there is hardly any evidence that this Chinese monk was in any way practising 'tantrism'. It was thought that O-rgyan gling-pa had access to old documents comparable to those of Dunhuang, which he utilized in composing his *Blon po bka' thang*,[6] but a close examination shows that the section of that work concerning Dhyāna[7] is simply a summary of the section on the same subject in the *bSam gtan mig sgron* of gNubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes.[8] In summarizing the section in question O-rgyan gling-pa has misinterpreted his source. Moreover, it is known that he has taken a similar approach to his sources

learned magic spells from lHa-rje hūṃ-chung, who appears to have been the great grandson of gNubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes. 'Gos further states that there was only one generation between gNubs and Zur-po-che Śākya 'byung-gnas (ca. early 11th century). See Roerich, 1949: 109.

3. *MBT*, p.60 *et seq.*
4. *hva shang ma hā spyod thabs bcu gnyis yod/ theg pa chen po gsang sngags pa la ni/ dbang gi rim pa mang po nod pa dang/ ... gsang sngags pa yi spyod thabs bcu gnyis so/* (*MBT*, pp. 69 & 83).
5. Demiéville, 1956: 285.
6. *MBT*, p. 69 (translated on p. 83).
7. *MBT*, pp. 68-81.
8. *bSam gtan mig sgron*, pp. 118-186.

in some of the other sections of the *bKa' thang sde lnga*.[9] The reliability of his writings as historical source materials is therefore very questionable indeed. I have made a detailed comparative analysis of some parts of the two works[10] and have found that O-rgyan gling-pa's twisted representation of Hva-shang Mahāyāna as a 'tantrist', as well as the criticism of the rDzogs chen by the Sa-skya-pa and other schools, seems to have misled scholars who have dealt with the rDzogs chen, causing them to conclude that a certain number of the rNying-ma-pa tantra, particularly those of the rDzogs chen, embody the essential elements of Ch'an teaching.[11]

There are two traditional accounts concerning the origin of rDzogs chen in Tibet. While one tradition ascribes it to Padmasambhava, the other attributes it to Vairocana, who is considered to have become one of the first Tibetan monks in the eighth century. The fundamental text of the tradition which goes back to Padmasambhava is the famous text *Man ngag lta ba'i pheng ba*.[12] It is attributed to Padmasambhava himself, who is said to have composed it just before his departure from Tibet.[13] Although it cannot be proved that it is in fact a work of this semi-legendary figure, there is little doubt as to its antiquity. In my opinion it goes back at least to the late ninth century. In its formal structure it resembles the *grub mtha'* (Skt. *siddhānta*) type of Indo-Tibetan literary work, but doctrinally its predominant theme is tantric, having particular associations with the *gSang ba snying po'i rgyud* (*Guhyagarbhatantra*).[14] Like many of the works on rDzogs chen, this text has also been the object of much controversy,[15] but in later centuries certain dGe-lugs-pa masters, for example Panchen Blo-bzang chos-rgyan (1567-1662), came to accept it as a genuine work on rDzogs chen.[16]

The second traditional account of the origin of rDzogs chen in Tibet is connected with Vairocana. He is believed to have been a disciple of Padmasambhava and has been as much an object of mystery as Padmasambhava himself in rNying-ma-pa and Bonpo literature. According to this account, the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan sent Vairocana to India with a companion in order to search for advanced Buddhist teachings. He is said to have met several masters of the doctrine and brought back to Tibet five texts on rDzogs chen amongst many other Buddhist texts. On his return he is believed to have made translations of these texts, which

9. Blondeau, 1971: 33-48 and 1975-76: 112-118.
10. Karmay, 1988a, 90-98.
11. Tucci and Heissig, 1973: 35.
12. *T* Vol. 83, No. 4726. For a study of this text, see Karmay, 1988a, 137-74.
13. *BZh*, pp. 25-26.
14. *K* Vol. 10, No. 455; *NyG* Vol. *Pha*.
15. *NgD*, pp. 265-266, 277-279, 314, and 385-386.
16. *dGe ldan bka' brgyud rin po che'i bka' srol phyag rgya chen po'i rtsa ba rgyas par bshad pa yang gsal sgron me* (ed. bKra- shis lhun-po), fol. 12b. 3.



we shall discuss later on. Owing to strained circumstances, the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan is thought to have expelled him from Central Tibet to Tsha-ba-rong. Vairocana was therefore unable to establish himself and preach his newly imported doctrine.[17]

Now both these accounts, while asserting the Indic origin of rDzogs chen, make the point that neither of the masters was actually able to implant the new doctrine in Tibet. This does not mean, however, that the doctrine of rDzogs chen was not known at all in Tibet prior to the tenth century. Buddhism in Tibet went through a radical change after the monastic persecution of King Glang Dar-ma (803-842), which took place around 839. I say 'monastic' because the persecution was not simply anti-Buddhist. It was, rather, directed against the monastic establishments. We know that ecclesiastic interference in the affairs of state was already very much resented during the reign of King Ral-pa-can (b. 805).[18] The establishment of the monastic system became too great a financial and social burden for the state, for it involved the maintenance of no small number of Buddhist monks in bSam-yas and in other religious establishments, such as the Jo-khang in Lhasa. The kingdom was badly in need of recruits for military service and the royal government was trying to continue to run the country and look after the few territorial possessions which were still left to it. In my opinion, based on a certain number of Dunhuang documents,[19] the persecution was therefore not simply anti-Buddhist, as later Tibetan Buddhist historians would like us to believe. The persecution however did pave the way for new religious developments. As the system of monastic establishments was dismantled, tantric teaching became more popular and widespread than before, since it did not require communal setup dependent on lay support. This was in contrast to the previous situation in the eighth century, when the two practices were kept strictly separate.

Translations of tantra had been controlled by strict royal order and their practice was kept to a minimum in the monastic establishments. The later syncretic development of the two practices which characterizes Tibetan Buddhism from the eleventh century onwards was not yet in sight, though after the persecution a strong leaning towards tantrism became manifest. During the period preceding Glang Dar-ma's reign not only Buddhism but other trends of thought were known to the Tibetans, particularly Manicheism and Taoism.[20] However we know very little indeed about the period between the year 842, that is, the year of Glang Dar-ma's assassination by a Buddhist monk, and approximately 950.

17. *VD*, f.45b-71a.(Karmay, 1988a: 17-37).
18. *BZh*, pp. 75-76.
19. See Article No. 6, pp. 89-93.
20. See Stein, 1978-79: 551-552; 1980: 334.

These hundred years are the most obscure period of Tibetan history. Judging from the few Dunhuang documents relating to that century all kinds of religious practices were in vogue and, further, due to political anarchy no central authority existed to check religious speculation which was productive of new ideas, such as the conception of 'Primordial Purity' (*ka dag*). These speculations were important elements contributing to the development of Tibetan Buddhism in the eleventh century, among which the rDzogs chen doctrine stands out as one of the most important developments of the period.

Although the elements which predominantly constitutes the rDzogs chen are tantric, it seems to be the product of purely Tibetan speculation, formed out of various Buddhist and non-Buddhist elements when monastic discipline had totally broken down, while other religious practices had become wide-spread and the country itself was in a state of political chaos. Another source which inspired the rDzogs chen is thought to be the Indian 'School of the Mahāsiddhas',[21] but we find no evidence of any texts containing the teaching of this 'school' being translated during the reigns of the kings preceding Glang Dar-ma. None are mentioned in the early catalogues like the *lDan kar dkar chag* and we know that the cycle of *Dohā* texts were translated only in the eleventh century.[22] However this does not contradict the fact that there are parallel ideas in these songs and rDzogs chen. On the other hand, the Ch'an school was fairly well known in Tibet in the eighth century and its teaching persisted in certain areas right up to the time of the persecution. It is therefore likely that it made some contribution to the development of rDzogs chen thought during the period in question.

That rDzogs chen is one Tibetan Buddhist doctrine that steps out of the mainstream of orthodox teachings is certainly the case, for its central theory of 'Primordial Purity' presupposes the existence of a positive entity within oneself.[23] The element that makes it even more unorthodox is the concept of the material body dissolving totally into light as the supreme attainment. It is this element that gives rise to the suspicion of Bonpo influence in the rDzogs chen doctrine.[24] Little is known concerning the state of this teaching in the eighth century, since we cannot totally exclude the existence of texts containing similar ideas. We know with certainty, however, that rDzogs chen emerges as a distinctive doctrine during the tenth century, still feeble but having the force to become controversial.

21. *MBT*, pp. 102-110. For a discussion of the possibility of the existence of rDzogs chen in Tibet before the official introduction of Buddhism, see Kvaerne, 1972: 36-40; *cf.* also Namkai Norbu, 1981: 17-19.
22. See Guenther, 1969: 15.
23. See *LRB*, pp. 79-80.
24. See *DTs*, pp. 283-284.



I now will return to the question of the five texts of Vairocana. One of these seems to be a good example of the type of work that may have been composed in the later half of the ninth century. It is entitled *Rig pa'i khu byug* (*The Cuckoo of the Intellect*), and is the first of the five texts which are traditionally called *snga 'gyur lngá*, the 'five early translations'. These are included in the group of eighteen texts known as *Sems sde bco brgyad*,[25] which are presented in the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* as translated works. The *Rig pa'i khu byug* begins with what seems to be a fake Sanskrit title which reads: *san ti dar pa*, the equivalent of which is given as *rDzogs pa chen po sa gcig pa*. Now the word *santi*, often preceded by *mahā*, is usually given as the equivalent of the Tibetan expression *rdzogs pa chen po*, but the term *santi* itself remains as obscure in its origin as it does in meaning. So, too, the word *dar pa*,[26] which hardly corresponds to its supposed Tibetan translation, *sa gcig pa*, the 'single stage'. While the expression *sa gcig pa* occurs in rDzogs chen texts, the *Rig pa'i khu byug* is itself never referred to by this title. The title *Rig pa'i khu byug* itself is given at the end of the text suggesting that it has no equivalent Sanskrit title. The text is very short and is composed in verse. There are only six lines and the sense remains suggestive and cryptic.

I have undertaken elsewhere to discuss the place of the *Rig pa'i khu byug* in relation to contemporary texts and other works which may have preceded it, as well as its important and positive role in the development of the rDzogs chen thought and literature of later centuries.[27] Here an attempt is made to render the verses into English along with the Tibetan text. This is not the place to provide a long list of all the later rDzogs chen tantra in which these verses form a kind of nucleus. It will suffice to give just one example: the same verses are inserted in the *Kun byed rgyal po*[28] as the 31st chapter of that work, under the title *rDo rje tshig drug*.[29] The *Kun byed rgyal po* is one of the major works on rDzogs chen dating back beyond the eleventh century, but, again, it is very controversial. It also claims to be of Indic origin.

The antiquity of the *Rig pa'i khu byug* is proved by the fact that there exists a manuscript version of it among the Dunhuang documents. It is No. 746 of the Sir Aurel Stein collection of Dunhuang manuscripts preserved in the India Office Library in London.[30] In this manuscript there is neither the Sanskrit title, nor any sign that it is a translated work. In

25. For a list of the texts and their references, see Aricle No. 2, p. 34, n. 95.
26. Perhaps this is derived from the Sanskrit *dharā*, *"earth" dharā > dhar > dar pa*.
27. Karmay, 1988a: 41-59.
28. *K* Vol. 9, No. 451; *NyG Ka*. For further discussion of this work, see Article No. 5.
29. *NyG Ka*, fol. 96-97.
30. De la Vallée Poussin, 1962.

fact no title at all is given. However the text is followed in the manuscript by what seems to be a short commentary which is extremely important for understanding the text. This is anonymous as are the verses themselves. It appears from the commentary that the text in fact has three titles: (1) *Rig pa'i khu byug,* (2) *Rig byed snang ba'i rgyan,* (3) *rDo rje tshig drug.* The commentary explains the first title as being a simile (*dpe*), whereas the second title is said to accord with the subject-matter (*don*), and the third with the number of verses.[31] As we have seen, the second and third titles are not given in the version contained in the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum,* but the text is often known in later works on rDzogs chen, i.e. those of the eleventh century and later, under the title *rDo rje tshig drug.*[32] The commentary, too, gives no indication whatsoever that the text might be a work translated from another language. The fact that a commentary is joined to the text in the Dunhuang manuscript proves that its composition goes back in time to a very early period, but it does not give the impression that it was written by the author of the basic text.

The manuscript is in the traditional format, with six lines on each side of the folia, and it is written in the *'bru ma* script, i.e. a mixture of *dbu can* and *dbu med.* Like all the Dunhuang documents our manuscript no doubt goes back beyond the eleventh century, but just how far back it goes is at present a matter of conjecture. In my opinion it does not date so far back as the eighth century. Neither of the libraries in London and Paris, where most of the Dunhuang manuscripts are preserved, as yet has the kind of service required for examining the materials which might enable us to determine the age of the manuscript.

In the rDzogs chen tradition of the Bonpo the cuckoo plays an important role in the legendary account of the transmission of the precepts. One sage is called Bar-snang khu-byug, the 'Cuckoo of space'.[33] In this connection there certainly exists a Bonpo work also entitled *Rig pa'i khu byug.*[34] It is not available at present and does not seem to be the same as our text, to judge from the few lines quoted in other Bonpo works. It will be certainly interesting to make comparisons if and when it turns up.

In conclusion, the five texts which the rNying-ma-pa tradition

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31. fol. 4b 1.6: *rig pa'i khu byug ni dpe/ rig byed snang ba'i rgyan ni don/ rdo rje tshig drug ni grangs/*
32. Rong-zom Chos-kyi bzang-po, *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa,* in *Rong zom bka' 'bum (po-ti,* n.p., n.d.) fol. 210. For a short analysis of this work, see Karmay, 1988a: 121-33.
33. sPa bsTan-rgyal bzang-po, *rDzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan brgyud kyi brgyud pa'i bla ma'i mam thar* (composed in 1419): *History and Doctrine of the Bonpo Nispanna-yoga, SPS,* Vol. 73 (Delhi, 1968), text Ka, pp. 10-11.
34. Shar-rdza bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan (1859-1934), *dByings rig rin po che'i mdzod gsang ba nges pa'i rgyan* (lithographic edition, Delhi, ca. 1956), Vol. *Ka,* fol. 26a, 1.3.



presents as translations made by Vairocana in the eighth century are most probably Tibetan works. In any case the *Rig pa'i khu byug* was almost certainly written by a Tibetan author in the latter half of the ninth century. All the five texts contain a teaching which is a syncretism of the doctrine of 'Primordial Purity' and tantric practice, developed during the period that has been under consideration.

**Translation of the Dunhuang manuscript version of the Tibetan text.**

(fol. 1a) *Svasti.* Homage to the great bliss of the indestructible body, speech and mind of the most perfect, All Good, most glorious among the glorious:

(1) The nature of phenomenal existence is not dual.
(2) The parts themselves are devoid of conceptualization.
(3) They are as they are, not to be thought of.
(4) All Good shines forth in all forms.
(5) Having grasped it, abandon the ill of striving.
(6) Dwelling in spontaneity, leave things as they are.

**The Dunhuang manuscript version of the Tibetan text**

(Stein 647).

(fol. la, 1.1) *svasti dpal gyi dpal/ bcom ldan 'das/ kun tu*[1] *bzang po/ sku gsung thugs rdo rje bde ba chen po la phyag 'tshal lo/* (1.2)

(1) *sna tshogs rang bzhin myi gnyis kyang/*
(2) *cha shas nyid du spros dang bral/*
(3) *ji bzhin pa*[2] *zhes myi rtog kyang/*
(4) *rnam par snang mdzad kun tu*[3] (1.3) *bzang/*
(5) *zin pas rtsol ba'i nad spangs te/*
(6) *lhun gyis*[4] *gnas pa bzhag*[5] *pa yin // //*

**The Tibetan text contained in the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum***

(Vol. Ka, fol. 419).

(1.1) *rgya gar skad du/ san ti dar pa/ bod skad du/ rdzogs pa chen po sa gcig pa/ svasti/* (1.2) *dpal gyi dpal/ bcom ldan 'das kun tu bzang po sku gsung thugs rdo rje bde ba chen po lhun gyis rdzogs pa la phyag 'tshal lo/*

(1) *sna tshogs rang bzhin mi gnyis kyang/*
(2) *cha shas nyid du spros* (1.3) *dang bral/*
(3) *ji bzhin pa zhes myi rtog kyang/*
(4) *rnam par snang mdzad kun tu bzang/*
(5) *zin pas rtsol ba'i nad spangs te/*
(6) *lhun gyis gnas pas bzhag*[6] *pa yin//*
*byang chub kyi sems rig pa khu byug* (1.4) *rdzogs so//*

1 *du.* 2 *ba.* 3 *du.* 4 *kyis.* 5 *gzhag.* 6 *gzhag.*

# PART III

# The Bon Religion

# A General Introduction to the History and Doctrines of Bon

This article contains a series of lectures that were given in the Toyo Bunko, Tokyo in 1975.

1. 'Ol-mo lung-ring
2. gShen-rab Mi-bo
3. The Persecution of Bon in the eighth century A.D. and subsequent developments
4. The Bonpo Canon
5. The Origin of the World
6. The Bonpo Pantheon
7. The Bonpo Rituals
8. Marriage Ritual
9. rDzogs chen

## 1. 'Ol-mo lung-ring

Today we shall begin with the provenance of the Bon religion, and in the following months we will trace its historical development, doctrines, practice and rituals. These introductory lectures will of necessity give only a broad outline, for the historical origins and development of Bon are as complicated as its doctrines.

Bonpo tradition maintains that the ultimate source of Bon is the land of 'Ol-mo lung-ring, said to be a part of sTag-gzig (Tazig). This so-called sTag-gzig is identified by scholars as Persia. The question as to whether 'Ol-mo lung-ring means anything in Tibetan cannot readily be answered. The traditional explanation is as follows: *'Ol* signifies unborn, *mo* undiminishing, *lung* the words of gShen-rab, and *ring* the everlasting compassion of gShen-rab.[1] From a glance at this we may deduce that it is a rather late and arbitrary explanation. It would appear to mean literally 'Long Valley of 'Ol-mo'. Similar place-names in Tibet itself, such as Bon-mo lung-ring do not seem to bear any relation to the 'Ol-mo lung-ring of sTag-gzig. Nevertheless, they may have contributed to the confusion surrounding its whereabouts.

Does 'Ol-mo lung-ring form a part of this world or is it an imaginary holy land like Sukhāvatī? The answer to both questions

1. *ZM*, vol. Ka. Chap. 7, f. 120b, (Delhi, 1965). Kvaerne, 1974: K 6; Karmay, 1977: No.4.



according to Bonpo tradition is in the affirmative. It forms of a part of this world, because it is situated in sTag-gzig in the west, and yet it is imperishable, for when ultimately this world is consumed by fire, it will raise itself up into the sky and unite with another Bonpo heaven in the heavens, called Srid-pa ye-sangs with which we shall deal in another lecture (No.5).

The idea of an indestructable but still material world is not peculiar to Bon. In Buddhism Vajrāsana likewise rises into the sky when this world perishes. To Bonpo believers it matters little whether it be a part of this world or not. Perhaps it would be useful here to take up a traditional account of the land of 'Ol-mo lung-ring in order to demonstrate precisely how the Bonpo conceived of its existence and its relation to the world in which we live. First of all, it is stated that 'Ol-mo lung-ring occupies one third of this world and is situated vaguely in the west. It is described as taking the form of an eight-petalled flower with the sky correspondingly in the shape of a wheel with eight spokes. The land is dominated by Mt g.Yung-drung dgu-brtsegs—literally 'pile of nine swastikas'. Both the swastika and number nine are of great significance in Bon. Swastika, corresponding to *vajra* in Buddhism, is the symbol of indestructability. In ancient inscriptions the word *g.yung drung* is often used as an adverb with the particle *du, g.yung drung du*, meaning 'always' or 'permanently'. It also forms a part of the epithet of Bon, *'phrul ngag g.yung drung Bon*, 'the magic word, everlasting Bon'. However, *g.yung drung* as an epithet of Bon never seems to have been used before the tenth century A.D. although the exact period when it came into use is not yet known. Number nine is connected with the earth, the heavens and the doctrines amongst other things in Bon. The earth is believed to have nine layers from the crust on downwards (*sa rim pa dgu*). The heavens originally had nine stages (*gnam rim pa dgu*), but later expanded to thirteen, another auspicious number in Bon. The doctrines of Bon are also classified into nine different ways (*theg pa rim pa dgu*). To go back to Mt g.Yung-drung dgu-brtsegs, its nine stages are said to represent the nine ways of Bon. One strange thing about this mountain is that its peak is in the form of a crystal monolith referring originally no doubt to its snowy or glacial summit. Later on conspicuous importance was attached to this crystal monolith. Four rives flow from the base of the mountain in the four directions. In the east the river Kyim-shang flows from the mouth of a horse shaped rock (rTa-mchog kha-'babs); in the north the river Pakshu flows from the mouth of a lion (Seng-ge kha-'babs); in the west the river Ganga flows from the mouth of an elephant (Glang-chen kha-'babs); and in the south the river Na-ra-dza flows from the mouth of a peacock (rMa-bya kha-'babs). Hundreds of temples, cities and parks are said to be in the vicinity of the mountain, but only eight centres stand out as worthy of

note. To the east of the mountain is a temple called Sham-po lha-rtse; to the south the palace Bar-po so-brgyad, the birth-place of gShen-rab; to the west is the palace of Khri-smon rgyal-bzhad, where gShen-rab's wife Hos-bza' rGyal-bzhad-ma lives and where three of his children, gTo-bu, dPyad-bu and Ne'u-chen were born; in the north is the palace of Khong-ma ne'u-chung where another of gShen-rab's wives dPo-bza' Thang-mo lives, and three more of his children, Lung-'dren, rGyud-'dren and Ne'u-chung were born. Mt g.Yung-drung dgu-brtsegs and these four centres constitute the inner region (*nang gling*) of 'Ol-mo lung-ring. After this there is the intermediate region (*bar gling*) consisting of twelve cities, four of which are situated at the cardinal points.The city in the west is called rGya-lag 'od-ma where Kong-tse 'phrul-gyi rgyal-po lives. We shall come back to this important figure later. After this we come to outer regions of the land (*mtha' gling*). These three regions are said to be divided by rivers and lakes, and the whole land is skirted by an ocean known Mu-khyud dbal-ba'i rgya-mtsho, the Spreading Ocean of Enclosure. It was in this ocean to the west of 'Ol-mo lung-ring that Kong-tse 'phrul-gyi rgyal-po built his miraculous temple. Tradition tells us that he was a Chinese king and a follower of gShen-rab Mi-bo. The temple became a very important place, because it was there that the chief disciples of gShen-rab Mi-bo gathered together all of gShen-rab's teachings, wrote them down, and deposited them. The ocean surroundng 'Ol-mo lung-ring is in turn enclosed by a circle of snowy mountains called dBal-so gangs-kyi ra-ba, Wall of Sharp Snowy Mountains. This is similar to the name sometimes used for Tibet by Tibetans: Gangs-ri'i ra-bas bskor-ba'i zhing-khams, Land ringed by a wall of snowy mountains.

Access to 'Ol-mo lung-ring is said to be via the 'arrow path' (*mda' lam*). This path was created by gShen-rab on a visit to Tibet by shooting an arrow from inside the ring. The arrow pierced the mountain wall making a great tunnel.The place where the arrow struck is not mentioned though, and passing through this tunnel is not an easy matter. There are many gorges and wild beasts on the way and moreover it is dark and takes nine days to get through. For the believer there is no word suggesting how far it would be if one made the journey from say Central Tibet, nor is there any kind of guide book, like the *Shambhala'i lam yig* of the Third Pan-chen dPal-ldan ye-shes (b. 1737).

What is given here is only a fraction of the elaborate descriptions found in many works by Bonpo writers from the eleventh century onwards. Nevertheless we have the essentials necessary for a consideration of the position of this extraordinary land. The particular problem the Bon adepts face is the geographical identificaiton of 'Ol-mo lung-ring in accordance with their scriptures. The double reality of 'Ol-mo lung-ring in this world and yet beyond it makes the problem more enigmatic. The



question to ask here is in what century the Bonpo began to assert that 'Ol-mo lung-ring was situated in so-called sTag-gzig, yet existing within Zhang-zhung, and why they did this. So far there is no factual evidence from recovered manuscripts or inscriptions that indicate the existence of the name or even the notion of such a land before the tenth century A.D. On the other hand, no archaeological excavation or systematic collection of manuscripts has ever yet taken place in Tibet. The period from the disastrous collapse of the Tibetan empire following the assassination of the king Glang Dar-ma up to the beginning of the tenth century cover the darkest years in Tibetan history, when next to nothing is known. What little evidence there is shows that during this period Tibet was in a state of both religious and political confusion. However, at the beginning of the tenth century as Buddhism began to take hold on Tibetan soil once more, feverish activity in the importation and translation of new Buddhist teachings from India took place.This probably inspired the Bonpo to review their own position. They too began to think that their religion could not have originated in an ordinary place. sTag-gzig (Persia) whose civilisation Tibetans highly admired from the seventh century onwards was taken to be the country that contained 'Ol-mo lung-ring the birth-place of gShen-rab.

At any rate, judging from the scriptural descriptions of the mountains and rivers in 'Ol-mo lung-ring, in the light of modern geographical knowledge, the snowy mountain Ti-se (Kailash) with the rivers that flow from its adjacent regions may very well be one and the same as Mt g.Yung-drung dgu-brtsegs. Firstly, because Ti-se was the most important centre of Zhang-zhung which is, according to some traditions, the source of Bon. In all probability it was there that Bon, or beliefs similr to Bon originated. Secondly there are important Bonpo texts written in both the language of Zhang-zhung and in Tibetan, and while some scholars consider Zhang-zhung to be an artificial language, created by the Bonpo, the existence of a large number of Zhang-zhung words in modern Kunawari, in the old western Tibetan region, deserves attention.[2]

This identificaton of 'Ol-mo lung-ring as the region of Mt Ti-se is supported in *NyZG*, an important work of the fourteenth century, where it is clealry stated that China is in the east; India in the south; O-rgyan in the west and Li (Khotan) in the north.[3] However there is evident confusion when 'Ol-mo lung-ring itself is described, because rGya-lag 'od-ma-gling is placed in the west although it is the native country of Kong-tse 'phrul-gyi rgyal-po whose prototype is Confucious.[4]

2. Haarh, 1968;. Stein, 1971.
3. f. 22a, b.
4. Stein, 1959: 29-30. See also Article No.10.

However, to counteract the obvious contradiction that the Ti-se region is not 'Ol-mo lung-ring as described in texts such as *ZM*, tradition holds that Ti-se and its vicinity only 'represent' 'Ol-mo lung-ring in Zhang-zhung.

Of course there is nothing surprising in the unwillingness on the part of believers to come to terms with facts. Ti-se and its vicinity is considered to be the holy land of Bon, yet this region is too ordinary to be the birth-place of gShen-rab since one can visit it. This tangibility is unsatisfactory to the mind of the believer who prefers a mystical, unknown land that only exists on a spiritual level.

It may be worthwhile to turn our attention for a moment to the recent discussions concerning 'Ol-mo lung-ring in *Tibetan Review*.[5] In 1964 the Bonpo scholar Tenzin Namdak published a small booklet of Bonpo chronology together with a vocabulary of the Zhang-zhung language with Tibetan equivalents.[6] In this book he included a traditional representation of 'Ol-mo lung-ring based upon his readings of descriptions in texts. This map was first taken up by Gumilev and Koznetsov (1970), both described it as an ancient Tibetan map. The schematic representation, according to them, showed some resemblance to the geography of the Middle East and Persia under the Empire of Cyrus the Great, that is in the era before Christ. They believe that certain names of places and palaces are transcrptions of words of Persian origin, one of these being the equivalent of Jerusalem, on the far west of the map. These observations certainly fit in with the Bonpo tradition and I only hope that they continue their research in this direction as it would be immensely important.[7]

## 2. gShen-rab Mi-bo

gShen-rab Mi-bo is the founder of the Bon religion. He occupies a position very similar to that of Śākyamuni in Buddhism, but in contrast to the Buddha, we have no available sources with which to establish his historicity, his dates, his racial origin, his activities, and the authenticity of the enormous number of books either attributed directly to him or believed to be his word.The latter, the Bonpo say, were written down after his death in much the same way as the Buddist scriptures were assembled. It is only from later sources in which fact and legend are woven together that we can get any idea about his life. No pre-tenth century materials are so far available that might throw light on activities such as his visit to Tibet and his relationship with the demon Khyab-pa lag-ring who is said to have lived in Kong-po in Central Tibet.

5. Delhi, Jan.-Feb. 1973, p. 14; Dec. 1973, back page.
6. *sGra yi doṇ sdeb snang gsal sgron me* by Zhu Nyi-ma grags-pa, Delhi, 1965 (Haarh, 1968).
7. For a detailed discussion on this mythic land, one can now consult the article by D. Martin (1995).



Here I shall give a brief account of gShen-rab in accordance with the Bonpo tradition. In the heaven Srid-pa ye-sangs, there were three brothers, Dag-pa, gSal-ba and Shes-pa. All three were studying Bon under 'Bum-khri glog-gi lce-can, a Bonpo sage. After completing their studies they all went to the divinity gShen-lha 'Od-dkar to ask him what they could do about the misery of living beings. gShen-lha 'Od-dkar told them that they could each work in three successive ages as the Guide. When Dag-pa finished his duty in the age past, gSal-ba the second brother became gShen-rab as the Guide of the age present. Meanwhile Shes-pa is still waiting to take up his task in the age that has yet to come. gShen-lha 'Od-dkar promised gShen-rab that he would be his supervisor, whereas Srid-pa Sangs-po 'bum-khri agreed to assist him by keeping the world in order. We shall come back to these divinities in another lecture (No.6).

These three are the Bonpo triad known as *lha gshen srid pa gsum*. gShen-lha 'Old-dkar and Srid-pa Sangs-po 'bum-khri assist gShen-rab in his task. gShen-rab then was born in 'Ol-mo lung-ring as a prince. From quite early on in his childhood, he began to preach Bon. Throughout his life the demon Khyab-pa lag-ring was his rival.Their relationship is similar to that of Śākyamuni and Devadatta. It is thought to be more than fortunate that there was such a demon who could provoke gShen-rab's reaction which otherwise would hardly have manifested themselves so strongly. Perhaps one of the most interesting parts of his life is the visit that he is said to have made to Tibet, not because he wanted to preach Bon, but because his seven horses had been stolen by Khyab-pa lag-ring. None the less, he wanted to make this an occasion to preach Bon in Tibet, but he found that the Tibetans were not yet ready to receive his teachings in full. He therefore prophesied that in future all his teachings would spread to Tibet from 'Ol-mo lung-ring when the time was ripe.

gShen-rab tried to overcome the demon by transforming himself into terrifying divinities, but the more ferocious he became the less effective it was, in the end Khayb-pa lag-ring surrendered only after gShen-rab had retreated into peace in a cave. He died at the age of eighty two.

The whole life of gShen-rab is conceived within the framework of twelve acts. Scholars have been quick enough to compare this with the life of Śākyamuni, in the same way as the latter's life is comparable to that of Zoroaster. Moreover, in the three hagiographical versions of gShen-rab's life, Buddist influence is continuously apparent.

(1) The earliest known account of gShen-rab's life would appear to be the *mDo 'dus*.[8] This work is supposed to be translation from the language of Zhang-zhung, but is classified as *gter ma*, 'rediscovered text'.

8. Kvaerne, 1974: K 7.

The date of its discovery goes back to the tenth century according to Bonpo chronology.[9] It is the shortest version in only one volume of twenty-one chapters.[10]

(2) The second version is *ZM* in two volumes with eighteen chapters. Its contents are already known to scholars, but the question of its date is still under study. It is also classified as *gter ma*. Whether *gter ma* means a text that has actually been found or merely a new work by an author who claims to have discovered it is another topic that we shall discuss in a further lecture (No.4). At any rate, *ZM* is considered to be the most important work among the scriptures. In an article [11] I arrived at the point where the date of its composition (or rediscovery if that is preferable) or at least some parts of it could be pushed back to the eleventh century A.D., because extensive quotations from it can be found in a work written in the eleventh century.

(3) The third version of gShen-rab's biography is *ZJ* and in twelve volumes.[12] Professor Snellgrove was the first European scholar to note this work, and with the collaboration of the Bonpo scholar Tenzin Namdak, he published their work under the title: *The Nine Ways of Bon*,[13] a translation of a few excerpts from the work concerning essentially the Bon doctrines. Apart from this publication, the major part of *ZJ* still remains unknown to the Tibetologists. According to the Bonpo classificaton of the scriptures, *ZJ* belongs to the category of Oral Transmission (*snyan brgyud*). That is to say that a sage or a divinity dictates a text to an adept who writes it down. *ZJ* is said to have been dictated to Blo-ldan snying-po (b. in the fourteenth century). It is therefore the latest version. Whether it was orally transmitted or not, it is certainly an extended version of *ZM*, yet it contains extensive materials of ancient origin, on a wide range of subjects: ideas, customs, interesting stories about birds and beasts and so on that are not found in *ZM*. It is a kind of epic story rather than a devotional religious biography.

As suggested above, *ZM* goes back to the eleventh century and the *mDo 'dus* is probably tenth century or even earlier. In these works we do not find the real Bonpo atmosphere, but rather Bonpo materials fitted into a general framework of Buddhist ideology, for example, the idea of *karma*, hence cause and effect, rebirth, the essentialy miserable nature of life and the method of escape from it and thus englightenment. At the same time, however, one quickly senses that much of the substance of the materials used in the composition may certainly be called Bonpo. In these works,

9. Kavaerne, 1971: 225-26, 256-58.
10. Kavaerne, 1971: 225-26, 256-58.
11. Article No.10. Also see Blondeau, 1971: 33-48.
12. Kvaerne, 1974: K 5; Karmay, 1977: No.3.
13. *London Oriental Series*, Vol. 18 (London, 1967).



gShen-rab Mi-bo is represented as a superhuman being whose only purpose in taking birth in this world is to preach Bon and guide all living beings to a better world. The glorification of this sage is taken as far as it could possibly go into fantasy.

Do we have information at all on him before the tenth century A.D.? Yes, but very little at present. In the Dunhuang manuscripts the form of his name: *gshen rab* or *gshen rabs myi bo* is mentioned at least six times as a type of 'priest'.[14] Although he is not presented here as an important figure, he at least seems to be an indispensable 'priest' who has the capacity of communicating between the living and the dead. We therefore might assume that such a person did exist and was of Tibetan origin living probably earlier than the seventh century A.D. Bonpo chronology dates him even earlier than the Buddha, and the fact that the Dunhuang manuscript acounts already have developed the flavour of legend indicates that he lived much earlier than the execution of the Dunhuang manuscripts which date to the latter half of the ninth century or the early part of the tenth century A.D. The later Bon tradition therefore has, in its claim of gShen-rab as its founder, some direct connection with the tradition that was prevalent in the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. The identification of gShen-rab with Lo'u-kyun (Laozi) made by Thu'u-bkvan Chos-kyi nyi-ma (1737-1802) cannot be taken as a serious suggestion.[15]

The glorification of this humble 'priest', *gshen rab myi bo* of the Dunhuang documents, may be compared with the historical Gautama and his deification as the Buddha in the Mahāyānic tradition. Although there is nothing that can be genuinely considered as gShen-rab's word, in spite of the enormous Bonpo Canon, the majority of which is attributed to him, to ask if gShen-rab wrote anything at all is much the same as asking whether Śākyamuni actually wrote anything.

The doctrines that gShen-rab is believed to have taught are divided into two main systems of classification. Firstly, there is the system of the so-called *sgo bzhi mdzod lnga* i.e. the Four Doors (or ways) and One Treasury, five in all. They are as follows:

1. *chab dkar*, White water.
2. *chab nag* , Black water.
3. *'phan yul*, the Country of 'Phan.
4. *dpon gsas*, the Guide.
5. *mtho thog*, the Summit.

14. *PT* 1068, 2; 1134; 1136; 1194; 1289 and 730 of India Office Library. Thomas, 1957, Chapter I A, text, p. 16. In the above manuscripts and in Thomas the orthography *gshen rabs myi bo* invariably occurs. For a discussion of the meaning of this name, see Stein,1971: 539, n.7 ; 540, n.11 and 1988: 43-45.
15. *ShM*, section Tha: *Ma hā tsi na'i yul du rig byed dang bon gyi grub mtha' byung tshul*, f. 15a.

Now *cab dkar*, signifies the esoteric teaching, mainly spells; *chab nag* consists of narratives and rituals; *'phan yul* embraces all the exoteric teachings, for example, monastic discipline; *dpon gsas* presents the direct and special precepts for psycho-spirtual exercises such as the system of rDzogs chen meditation; finally *mtho thog*, the Treasury is described as *spyi rgyugs* which means literally that it generaly runs into all the other four categories. Amongst these there is some direct correspondence with Buddhist classifications, *chab dkar* corresponds to the Buddhist tantra, and *'phan yul* to the sūtra. The background history of the peculiar usage of this term *'phan yul* has not yet been established. It is probably connected with the valley called 'Phan-po situated in Central Tibet.

The other system of classification is the *theg pa dgu*, variously translated as the Nine Ways or Vehicles. There are three versions of this system: the version of the southern trasure (*lho gter*), the northern treasure (*byang gter*) and the central treasure (*dbus gter*). These nine are further divided into three categories:

1. The first four are the 'ways of cause' (*rgyu'i theg pa*).
2. The second four are the 'ways of result' (*'bras bu'i theg pa*).
3. The ninth is the system of rDzogs chen meditation.

The excerpts of *gZi brjid* translated and published by D. L. Snellgrove (1967) contains only the version of the southern treasure. The other versions have not yet been studied. The relationship between the two systematic classifications is more complicated than it actually appears at first sight. The first system, in my opinion, is probably earlier than the second, but the latter presents a more comprehensive organisation of the verious stages and developments of Bon. It is however not only Bonpo who have organised their doctrines into nine categories, but also the rNying-ma-pa. I believe that one must have imitated the other. The question of which came first is not a simple matter that can be thrashed out in a few words. On one hand, the classification of the Buddhist teachings into nine *theg pa* by the Nying-ma-pa has not always been welcomed by the other orthodox Buddhist orders whose fear is largely founded in the idea that Bonpo systems and beliefs have penetrated those of the rNying-ma-pa and are therefore unacceptable. However, on the other hand, a work entitled *lTa ba'i rim pa bshad pa*[16] is attributed to the famous *lo tsā ba* sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs who lived towards the end of the eighth century A.D. This work contains a short exposition of what the rNying-ma-pa call the nine *theg pa*, while not specifically identifying the nine *theg pa* as such. If this work is genuine, then of course this would prove the dependence of the Bonpo system on that of the rNying-ma-pa.

16. *T* Vol. 144, No. 5843.



In the opinion of Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290-1364), however, the work under discussion is not genuine. He therefore thought that the question should be examined further. He says: "examine this"(*'di dpyad*).[17]

Finally a few words about the importance of research on gShen-rab's life at present and in the future. In fact no-one is seriously engaged in this field apart from Dr. Per Kavaerne who is making a detailed study of the eleven *thangka* paintings kept in Musée Guimet in Paris. These paintings depict the life of gShen-rab in great detail. They are also of very fine quality. They follow very faithfully the *ZJ* version. And for lexicographers, if work on the Tibetan language is to be complete and useful for all purposes, the vast vocabulary and terminology contained in gShen-rab's hagioraphies must be incorporated into present or future dictionaries.

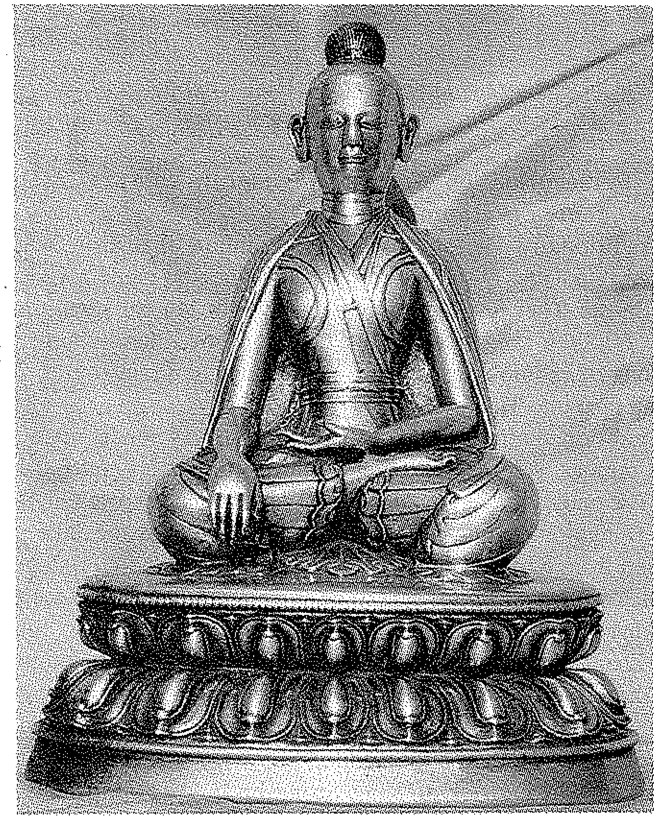


*Plate 8: A silver image of Dran-pa nam-mkha', Dolanji (P. Kvaerne 1965)*

17. *BTChB*, p. 1045.

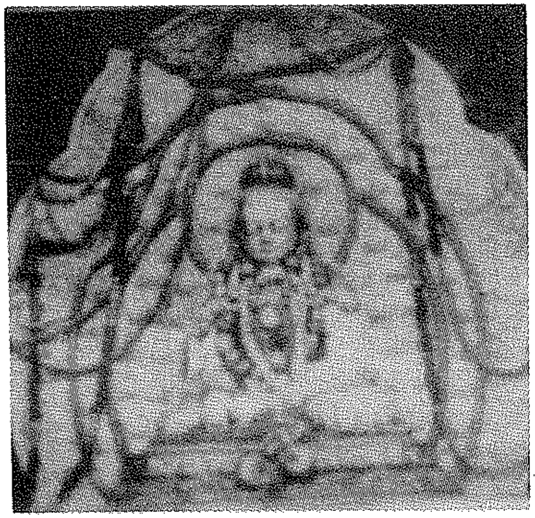


*Plate 9: A silver image of Dran-pa nam-mkha'. lCags-mdud-tshang, Shar-Khog, Amdo. Disappered during the Cultural Revolution*

### 3. The Persecution of Bon in the eighth century A.D. and subsequent developments

Traditionally Bonpo historians maintain that Bon was first introduced into Tibet by gShen-rab himself when he made a visit to the Land of Snows. They also say that the disciples of Mu-cho ldem-drug, the apostle of gShen-rab, brought his teachings to Zhang-zhung where translations of religious texts were made into the language of Zhang-zhung and then into Tibetan.

Tradition maintains that Zhang-zhung was made up of three different regions: sGo-ba, the outer; Phug-pa, the inner; and Bar-ba, the middle. The outer is what we might call Western Tibet, from Gilgit in the west to Dangs-ra khyung-rdzong in the east, next to the lake gNam-mtsho, and from Khotan in the north to Chu-mig brgyad-cu rtsa-gnyis in the south. The inner region is said to be sTag-gzig (Tazig), and the middle rGya-mkhar bar-chod, a place not yet identified. While we do not know whether Zhang-zhung covered such an enormous area, we do know that it covered the whole of Western Tibet and was an independent kingdom. The capital was Khyung-lung dngul-mkhar to the west of Mt Ti-se, and in the seventh century there was a king called Lig-myi-rhya. One of his wives, Sad-mar-kar, was a sister of King Srong-btsan sgam-po (d.649). The country was annexed to Tibet by this king in the seventh century A.D. although according to *PT* 1287 and Bonpo history, it was annexed by the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan(b.742) and therefore in the eighth century A.D.



The considerable confusion surrounding the date of the conquest of Zhang-zhung and the assassination of Lig-myi-rhya is no small matter. A fundamental revision of Tibetan history with regard to this annexation may be required. The earliest source which we can consult is *PT* 1287, but this manuscript undoubtedly underwent rearrangement before it was hidden in c. 1035 A.D. It consists of a long scroll containing historical accounts of Tibetan kings starting from Dri-gum btsan-po. It is now referred to as the Chronicle. Each of the accounts is clearly separated from the others by paragraphic spaces. After the accont of the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan, there immediately follows a paragraph on the fall of Zhang-zhung. It is this particular account, in connection with the reign of Khri Srong-lde-btsan, that interests us most. In the edition and French translation of this manuscript, the fall of Zhang-zhung is treated as an event that took place under the reign of Khri Srong-lde-btsan (paragraph VIII), simply because the new paragraph on Zhang-zhung begins: *rgyal po 'di'i ring la* ...'in the time of *this king*...'[18] The phrase 'this king' naturally would be taken to refer to the preceding named king who is Khri Srong-lde-btsan. In this French edition, the manuscript is designated as having ten paragraphs. However, in writing his *Deb ther dkar po*, dGe-'dun chos-'phel (1905-1951), the modern Tibetan historian, reversed the order by putting the event under the reign of Srong-btsan sgam-po without however making any comment on his important change.[19] He used some sort of photographicaly reproduced copies of the Dunhuang manuscripts for his history and was writing it in the early 1940s. He is therefore the first to notice the discrepancy. His treatment of the history at first appeared to me to be contrary to what the manuscript purports. However, we now know that the manuscript itself was rearranged, by being cut up and stuck together in a different order. This has been found by comparison with the Chinese text inscribed on the reverse of the scroll. The portion containing the account of the fall of Zhang-zhung was originally a continuation of the account of the reign of Srong-btsan sgam-po (paragrah VI).[20] Therefore dGe-'dun chos-'phel was right in his treatment of the materials.

However, the existence of a Bonpo history which contains a story parallel to that found in the rearranged Dunhuang manuscript is good evidence that late Bonpo sources had access to this ancient version, which clearly suggests that it was already widespread in the ninth century A.D. The Bonpo version, published in India, is entitled *Zhang zhung snyan brgyud kyi bon ma nub pa'i gtan tshigs,* 'The reason why the Bon of oral

18. Bacot *et al*, 1940:115.
19. *Bod chen po srid lugs dang 'brel ba'i rgyal rabs deb ther dkar po*, (ed. Lhasa), f. 29a.
20. Bacot *et al*, 1940:111.

transmission of Zhangzhung was not abolished'.[21] Its author is not known, but the text is reputed to be very ancient and is the only one extant. On the other hand in *PT* 1288, referred to as the Annals and *PT* 1286, there are short references to Zhang-zhung during the reign of Srong-btsan sgam-po, but here the name of the king of Zhang-zhung is not Lig-myi-rhya as one would expect, but Lig-snya-shur, and moreover neither the name of the Tibetan king nor his sister is given in both manuscripts.[22] We, therefore, must be cautious in leaning too heavily on arguments which assign the downfall of Zhang-zhung to the reign of Srong-btsan sgam-po. The question can only be decided in the light of a totally independent source through which the version contained in *PT* 1287 and the Bonpo history can be checked. In the opinion of Mme Macdonald this is provided by the manuscript *PT* 1047 which she considers to contain contemporary information in connection with the episode of Zhang-zhung's fall during the reign of Srong-btsan sgam-po.[23] The manuscript is about divination normally found in the Bonpo tradition.

As Zhang-zhung was annexed it gradually became Tibetanised, but at the same time contributed much towards the development of Tibetan culture in the early period, as it was situated just next door and was open to influences coming from Tazig (Iran), Bru-sha (Gilgit), Li (Khotan) and other Central Asian countries. Its own culture and language were integrated into those of Tibet and presumably its religion at the same time. The central deity that was worshiped by the people of Zhang-zhung was the *sku bla* Ge-khod whose residence was Mt Ti-se. The most reputed Bonpo teacher, Dran-pa nam-mkha' is believed to have been born in Khyung-lung dngul-mkhar in the eighth century. We have already discussed the language of Zhang-zhung in a previous lecture (No.1). Until recently Tibetan scholars were geographically misled by the lGe-lugs-pa historians in identifying Gu-ge as Zhang-zhung. Gu-ge was only a part of or small state attached to Zhang-zhung.

It was probably during the sixth and seventh centuries that a belief came to be associated with the kings and their surroundings. Tibetan kings were believed to be the descendants of the chief of the Phyva deities, Ya-bla bdal-drug. The divine nature of the kings and their deities, who are mostly mountain deities, probably originally formed the nucleus of this belief. Together with this there were priests who performed various rituals and conducted solemn ceremonies on special occasions, such as funerals and the singing of treaties. These priests were known as *gshen* or *bonpo*

21 *History and Doctrine of Bonpo Nispanna-yoga*, SPS, Vol. 73, (New Delhi, 1968), Section Pa, pp. 259-267 (Karmay, 1977: No.50, Pa).

22. Bacot *et al*, 1940: 13, 80. *Cf.* also A. Macdonald, 1971: 255-71.

23. A. Macdonald, 1971: 272 *et seq.*



and the rites they executed were known as *bon*. The belief in the divine nature of the kings and the rituals constituted the essential part of the religion. The existence of a large number of varied funeral rituals, the heirarchy of the *gshen* or *bonpo* priests and their belief in the divine nature of the kings and in some kind of afterlife clearly suggest that the religion was more complex than we actually realise.

Perhaps in the seventh century Bon was already adopting foreign elements. The Iranian influence in Bonpo consmogony is known. Moreover, towards the end of the seventh century Tibet was one of the strongest Asian powers, contesting for domination over Central Asia where Buddism was flourishing. As certain territories came under Tibetan rule, Tibetans in control in these places would obviously have come into direct contact with Buddhism, whereas in the court of Srong-btsan sgam-po Buddhism remained little more than a refined novelty. Bon therefore was exposed directly to Buddhist influence and through it Bon was most attracted by the Indian theories of *karma* and rebirth, which it absorbed without acknowledging the source. Bon ws still in an embryonic stage, blending three main elements: the worship of the divine nature of the kings and their associated mountain deities; Iranian ideas on the formation of the world; Indian theories such as *karma* and rebirth.

By the beginning of the eighth century Bon found itself in a position powerful enough to oppose the oncoming of the official introduction of Buddhism into Tibet. The king Khri Srong-lde-btsan was an ardent Buddhist whereas his chief wife, Tshe-spong-za dMar-rgyal is said to be a Bonpo. She was the only one of his several wives to bear him sons. It is believed that the religious differences between them became so great that she poisoned one of her sons who was becoming too enthusiastic about Buddhism. Bonpo tradition also maintains that she had her husband killed by means of magic. Whatever happend, the circumstances in which the king died are a complete mystery. On her side there were many infleuntial ministers. One of these was Ngan sTag-ra klu-gong whose services to his king and country were so esteemed that specially inscribed stone pillar was erected in his name in c. 760 A.D. This inscrbied pillar still stands in front of the Potala. According to *BZh*, however, a certain Ngan sTag-ra klu-gong was banished to the north because of his opposition to Buddhism, and there is also someone of the same name who erected a black *stūpa* in Bon style in bSam-yas. Either we have to say that there were two different persons with the same name or the *BZh* version is a later fabrication. The thirst of the aristocrats for political power was often disguised by religious disputation. One rival faction of the noble houses even managed to ban Buddhism temporarily while the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan was a minor.

After the establishment of bSam-yas, Buddism triumphed, but it was more of a political success than a purely religious one. The struggle of Bon continued, however. Ancient beliefs were so deeply ingrained in the Tibetan spirit, and the mass were still following Bon. However, Bon is said to have been persecuted and its priests banished from Central Tibet. Moreover, those, who did not wish to leave, agreed to take up Buddhist practices; as some of the Bonpo priests left they hid their books in many places in order to save them from destruction. The much venerated Bonpo sage Dran-pa nam-mkha' is believed to be one of those who conceded to take up Buddhism. In this way, tradition maintains, they could save Bon from complete eradication.

Almost every Bonpo historical work and some of those of the Buddhists, *BZh* and *KhG* for example, give accounts of an officially organised persecution of Bon in the eighth century A.D., but we do not have any contemporary account of this event although *PT* 239 shows that a certain conflict existed between the two faiths. Apart from this we have no independent source to check. We have to rely almost entirely on later texts to get a glimpse into this much confused issue.

Bonpo historians agree that the persecution took place in the year of the ox, when Khri Srong-lde-btsan was 45 years of age. I therefore have suggested in my translation of *LShDz* that the official abolition of Bon took place in 785 A.D.[24] Many Bonpo probably left for the frontier regions. It is known that the Nakhi Bonpo maintain that their ancestors came from Central Tibet when Bon was persecuted. At this time religious texts were quite probably hidden. There is a great difference between the Bonpo and the rNying-ma-pa in the idea of hiding books. Padmasambhava and his disciples are said to have hidden most of their religious texts because their followers were not yet sufficiently spiritually mature to understand them. On the other hand, the Bonpo maintain that they had no choice but to conceal their texts, because of the danger of desruction by the persecutors. Whatever the case may be, in later centuries both traditions claimed to have rediscovered large numbers of religious texts, both in connection with a period of hiding in the eighth century.

From 785 until 1017 A.D. we know practically nothing about Bon, although this period must have been extremely important for the subsequent religious development of the Bonpo as well as that of the rNying-ma-pa. According to Bonpo chronology it was with the rediscovery of texts by gShen-chen Klu-dga' (995-1035) in 1017 A.D. that the so-called 'later propagation of Bon' began. He is one of the most important figures in the later development of Bon, and was the first to

24. Karmay, 1972: 94, n. 2.



claim to have found a large number of texts. These *gter ma* went to form a large nucleus of the Bonpo Canon.

With him, Bon emerged as a fully organised religion, but without loosing its early chracterisitc practices and doctrines which Buddhism had tried to eliminate in Tibet from the outset. The attitude of the Bonpo towards Buddhism was now of reconciliation. The Buddha Śākyamuni was an emanation of gShen-rab and one of the six divinities who guide sentient beings from the six kinds of existences.What Bon was trying to do now was to embrace all the beliefs and practices that were available in Tibet, no matter where they came from. If there was a religion in Tibet that embranced all the religions of Tibet, this was Bon. It would therefore represent Tibetan lamaism in its complete sense.

gShen-chen Klu-dga' was born in the family of gShen who claimed direct descendance from Kong-tsha dBang-ldan, a son of gShen-rab Mi-bo.The seat of the family was in gTsang. When he was young his back was injured, causing it to become deformed. He was therefore known as gShen-sgur, the Crooked gShen. With the rediscovery of the religious texts he soon gathered many disciples together around him. Of these three became important for the subseqent four centuries of Bon development. Bru-chen Nam-mkha' g.yung-drung, one of the three disciple, was born in the family of Bru. His ancestors migrated from Bru-sha (Gilgit) to Tibet. gShen-chen Klu-dga' ordered him to establish the studies of the *mDzod phug*[25] and *Gab pa*,[26] both of which texts belonged to gShen-chen's rediscoveries. Consequently in 1072 this disciple founded the monastery of dBen-sa-kha in g.Yas-ru, which became the great seat of learning for the Bonpo until it was destroyed by a flood in 1386. dByar-mo thang-ba (b. 1144) and 'A-zha Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1198-1263) are the most renowned abbots of this monastery. Many of the abbots came from the Bru family, who considered itself patron of the monastery. However, when the monastery was destroyed, the family too declined and its line was finally extinguished altogether in the nineteenth century after the rebirths of two Panchen Lamas in the family. When Blo-bzang ye-shes (1663-1737), the second Panchen Lama was born, the whole family, as was customary, accompanied him to bKra-shis lhun-po, leaving no-one at the family seat. The local people feared that this might bring about the disappearance of the Bru line, and subsequently managed to save the situation by asking the bKra-shis lhun-po authorities to send back one member of the family. However in the nineteenth century the Fifth Panchen Lama, bsTan-pa'i dbang-phyung (1854-1882) was born again in this family. This time when the whole family went with him to bKra-shis lhun-po, no-one bothered about maintaining the line of the Bru

25. Kvaerne, 1974: K 2; Karmay, 1977: No.1.
26. Kvaerne, 1974: K 109; Karmay, 1977: No.52.

family. It abruptly came to an end. The family house and land became the property of the *bla brang* of bKra-shis lhun-po. The official biographers of these two Panchen Lamas have taken great care to conceal the religion of the Bru family. Whilst they praised effusively the high nobility of the clan in which the two lamas were born, they deemed it unnecessary to mention openly their family's religion as this might have undermined their holiness in the eyes of dGe-lugs-pa adherents.

Another prominent disciple of gShen-chen Klu-dga' was Zhu-yas Legs-po, to whom the teacher assigned the task of upholding the teachings of rDzogs chen meditation. He was born in the family of Zhu, whose descendants are still to be found among the Tibetan refugees in India. He founded the monastery of sKyid-mkhar ri-zhing in the eleventh century. It became an important centre for rDzogs chen philosophy and practice. Still another important disciple was sPa-ston dPal-mchog. He was to look after the tantric teachings. He belonged to the much esteemed sPa family, and initiated the setting up of a hermitage which later developed into a centre of tantric learning.[27] In addition to these three families of Bru, Zhu, and sPa who produced these disciples, there was yet another called rMe'u. While no-one from this family seems to have met gShen-chen, in the eleventh entury rMe'u *mkhas pa* dPal-chen (b. 1052) founded the monastery of bZang-ri, another centre for philosophical studies. Thus there were altogether four Bonpo centres all situated in gTsang. While the monasteries of Bru and rMe'u were concerned mainly with scholasticism, the other two pursued spiritual progress and contemplation. In this period Bonpo students used to roam around not only visiting their own monasteries, but also staying in those of the Buddhists, such as Sa-skya, sNar-thang and gSang-phu. We often come across stories in the biographies of Buddhist masters stating that they met Bonpo monks in debating arenas and defeated them through philosophical disputation. One particular example is Bu-ston who vanquished several Bonpo in gSang-phu while he was studying there.[28]

Sustenance for these large centres mainly depended on gifts offered by nomads living in the north. Most of the nomadic population of Tibet remained ardent followers of Bon throughout Tibetan history. They supplied necessities for the monasteries. The monasteries sent out missions for this purpose and these missions travelled to and fro transporting the gifts which usually consisted of animal produce. The monks later bartered these gifts against barley and other grains, and necessities not provided by the nomads.

27. For a short account of gShen-chen Klu-dga's life and his disciples, see Karmay, 1972: 126-140. Also see Smith,1970: 6, n. 13.

28. Ruegg, 1966: 6, n. 13.



During these centuries Bonpo enjoyed a good deal of quiet religious life. They did so as long as they kept away from the religious and political squabbles of the Buddhist orders. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, however, all the above mentioned centres began to fall into decadence and with the disapperance of the monastery of Bru in 1386, a new era began in Bonpo history. It came along with the Bonpo master mNyam-med Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan (1356-1415) a native of rGyal-rong, who founded the monastery of sMan-ri in 1405. This was to be the most important Bonpo centre until 1959, and although it remained quite mediocre in comparison to the earlier period of Bon development, it survived until the last day of Tibetan religous freedom. In 1834 another monastery was founded in gTsang by sNang-ston Zla-ba rgyal-mtshan (b. 1796). It was called g.Yung-drung-gling and was one of the largest Bonpo monasteries boasted two hundred monks. A little later another monastery called mKhar-sna was also established near sMan-ri. There were in all three important Bonpo centres in Central Tibet.

Compared to the quiet life of the early period from 1017 to 1386, this later stage turned out to be severe and difficult. Movements were checked by the dGe-lugs-pa theocratic government after they came to power, and under the Fifth Dalai Lama, Bonpo once more suffered from persecution along with the Jo-nang-pa order. Several Bonpo monasteries, particularly in the Khyung-po area, were converted into dGe-lugs-pa ones by force, and the most severe developments took place at Be-ri in Khams, where on the behalf of the dGe-lugs-pa hierarch, Mongol soldiers intervened to subdue his religious and political opponents.[29] However, the Bonpo were somehow spared the fate that befell the Jo-nang-pa who were totally banished from Central Tibet. This persecution continued throughout the period of the new theocratic rule, in one place or another. rGyal-rong which had always been a Bonpo stronghold successfully resisted Manchu encroachment for a number of years. The Emperor Qialong feeling helpless asked his spiritual instructor, the dGe-lugs-pa incarnation lCang-skya Rol-ba'i rdo-rje (1717-1786) to use his magic powers against the uncompromising Bonpo. The lama lost no time to take this good opportunity to vanquish the heretics by using the Chinese army. Although they failed to achieve their objective, one of whch was to extract the people of rGyal-rong from the Bon belief, they did manage to destroy the famous Bonpo monastery g.Yung-drung lha-sding in about 1775. Later a dGe-lugs-pa monastery called Byang-chub dge-'phel-gling was established in the same place. The emperor issued a sort of edict prohibiting the practice of the Bon religion.[30]

29. sDe-srid Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho, *VS*, p. 307 and p. 375. *ShM*, Ta, f. 8a.

30. *ShM, section* Ta, f. 8a. Brag-dgon bsTan-pa rab-rgyas, *Deb ther rgya mtsho* (=*Amdo chos 'byung*), section: *Kha gya tsho drug nas rgyal mo tsha ba rong gi bar gyi dgon*

Despite these difficulties the Bonpo kept up their tradition. New developments began especially in the philosophy of rDzogs chen in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This was started in Khams by the Bonpo master, Shar-rdza bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan (1858-1934). He was one of those who initiated the *ris med* movement (Universalism).[31] With his writings, which consist of about eighteen volumes, Bonpo tradition was not simply continuing, but was developing in a similar way to that of the rNying-ma-pa at the same period. This development finally brought about the founding of the new monastery of Khyung-lung dngul-mkhar near Mt Ti-se in 1936 by Ga-rgya Khyung-sprul 'Jigs-med nam-mkha'i rdo-rje (b. 1897). It was this lama who for the first time in Tibetan religious history produced a lithographic edition of the collected works of Shar-rdza bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan in Delhi in 1950.

## 4. The Bonpo Canon

The Bonpo Canon largely consists of two types of works: the rediscovered texts and texts of the oral transmission. First of all, the rediscovered texts (*gter ma*) are by no means unique to the Bonpo tradition. rNying-ma-pa literature also abounds in them. However, the proclivity of both Bonpo and rNying-ma-pa for this kind of religious writing and their claim that they are authentic works gave rise to much bickering on the part of the orthodox schools, for early on Sa-paṇ Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan (1182-1251) expressed doubt about their authenticity. A little later 'Bri-gung dPal-'dzin directly charged the rNying-ma-pa with falsification. In spite of this, the rNying-ma-pa went on compiling the great collection of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* which was not included in the Buddhist Kanjur due to the problem of authenticity. Moreover, they refuted the charges vigorously and, the polemic literature (*rtsod yig*, *dgag yig*) they produced is considerable. Now it is not only the Tibetan orthodox Buddhists, but also Western scholars who have joined in the choir calling the *gter ma* apocryphal. Bonpo, on the other hand, were much less concerned with what was said about the *gter ma* by the orthodox Buddhists. Large numbers of rediscoverers (*gter ston*) have followed one after the other from the tenth century A.D. until very recently.

The earliest date of rediscovery is 913 A.D. according to Bonpo chronology, but the codification of Bonpo texts took place when gShen-chen Klu-dga' (996-1035) discovered a large number of texts in 1017 A.D.

*sgrub sde phal che ba'i dkar chag tho tsam bkod pa*, (ed. bKra-shis-'khyil), f. 265b. Here the name of the monastery is given as bsTan-'phel-gling. Also see Smith, 1969:10.

31. Smith, 1970: 35, n. 67. For a short account of his life, see P. Kvaerne's Review of Karmay, 1972, *Acta Orientalia*, XXXV (1973), pp. 276-278.



His discovery makes up the main part of the Bonpo Canon. By the fourteenth century A.D. many rediscoveries had been made in various places so that different names came into use for each discovery. These were either connected witht the name of the rediscoverer or the name of the place where the books were found. The texts rediscovered by dPon-gsas Khyung-rgod-rtsal (b. 1175) are known by the name of dPon-gsas-ma, and those found in bSam-yas ca-ti are called Ca-ti-ma. More common names are connected witht the cardinal points, such as *dbus gter*, central treasure; *lho gter*, southern treasure and *byang gter*, northern treasure which only vaguely indicate where the texts originated.

The religious texts found in this way are not necessarily all apocryphal. Many of the Bonpo *gter ston* were in fact simple ordinary people, and Bonpo historians do not normally pretend that these *gter ston* displayed any kind of miraculous power in order to find the texts. It is said that in the tenth century three errant Nepalese wanderers found Bonpo texts in bSam-yas by accident, and as they were not interested in them, exchanged them for food. In the same century three hunters came across Bonpo texts when they were digging in the ground for some stones. In the twelfth century a shepherd simply walked in a cave which to his surprise was full of books. Likewise, pilgrims and travellers often found texts in old temples, *stūpa* and statues. There have been a number of *gter ston* who belonged to both the Bonpo and rNying-ma-pa traditions and there are also many instances of a Bonpo *gter ston* finding a Buddhist text in which case he simply handed it over to a rNying-ma-pa and vice-versa. Had Sir Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot been Tibetan and found their manuscripts in Tibet they would no doubt have been awarded with the title of *gter ston*. However, this, of course, does not mean that all *gter ma* are authentic. I am simply affirming the real possibility of finding old manuscripts. On the other hand, since only a few native Tibetan works can definitely be assigned to the eighth century, and this applies to all schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the Bonpo, the assumption arises that many of the *gter ston* who found old mnuscripts, whether whole or in parts, used them as a basis and then rewrote or extended the originals. One good example of this is *ZM*. Drang-rje *btsun pa* gSer-mig, who is said to have rediscovered this important text, has used materials that have parallel versions in Dunhuang manuscripts.[32]

Although the rNying-ma-pa have several catgories of *gter ma*, the Bonpo have only one kind. To this they added *snyan rgyud* orally transmitted texts. This particular tradition goes back to Gyer-mi Nyi-'od who was also a *gter ston*. He lived in the twelfth century. The method involved in producing the orally transmitted texts differs completely from

32. *Cf.* Article No.10. in this volume.

that of the *gter ma*. The recipient is normally considered to have a close spiritual connection with a teacher who is believed to have lived several centuries earlier. Gyer-mi Nyi-'od claimed to be a spiritual son of Dran-pa nam-mkha'. It was he who appeared in visions of Gyer-mi Nyi-'od and dictated texts while the recipient wrote down what he heard. Now the reason given for this technique is that the teacher who lived in the eighth century A.D. 'concealed' texts in his mind during the persecution of Bon, i.e. he memorized the texts before they were destroyed. When the right time comes to reveal the memorized teachings he recites them to a person whom he rcognizes as his own spiritual son. This idea more or less corresponds to the *dgongs gter* (mental-treasure) of the rNying-ma-pa although their method differs from that of the Bonpo. While *gter ston* found manuscripts on which they based their works, the recipients of the oral transmission never claimed to have found anything like the *gter ma*. Nonetheless, it would be quite impossible for them to produce such bulky volumes without any basis. This enigmatic problem can be brought to light by examining the contents of *ZJ*. We have already spoken of this work as the longest version of gShen-rab's life. It belongs to the category of oral transmission. The recipient of this work was Khyung-po Blo-ldan snying-po (b. 1360) and in many ways he is the key figure in the development of oral transmission although he was preceded by Gyer-mi Nyi-'od, the first recipient of such a work. These bulky volumes are enlargements of an already existing work. In addition, there is another type of oral transmission. This I would call the genuine oral transmission. *ZJ* belongs to the first type, because it is in the main an extended version *ZM*. The *Zhang zhung snyan brgyud* belongs to the second type, that is the genuine oral transmission, because a long list of hitorical persons, through whom the oral preceptual teachings were transmitted, is given. We shall be able to dewll on this when we examine rDzogs chen philosophy in another lecture (No.9).

By the beginning of the fifttenth century the Bonpo had put out numerous works of both the *gter ma* and *snyan brgyud* traditions. The exact date of the final assembly of the Canon is not known, but it has been suggested that this must have taken place prior to 1450.[33] In spite of many other works by important authors special emphasis has been laid upon the *gter ma* and *snyan brgyud* which meant that the scope of the assembled canon represented probably only two thirds of the total output of Bonpo works extant at the time. Like the Buddhists the assembly of the Canon was conducted in a very selective way.

Already in the works of Me-ston Shes-rab 'od-zer (1058-1132) we find discussions on the subject of *bka'* the Word of gShen-rab and *bka' brten*, the works that depend on the *bka'*, We have already mentioned the discovery by gShen-chen Klu-dga' which in itself was large enough to make the major part of the scriptures, and if such a collection had already been made there is nothing surprising in it, because the activity of assembling translated religious works was a well established phenomenon in Tibet from the eighth century onwards. For instance, three different *dkar chag* of Buddhist works existed by 815 A.D. The *lDan dkar dkar chag*[34] is still available. Although the use of the term *bka'* for the words of gShen-rab is an imitation of Buddhist usage, the term *bka' brten* to designate the works by masters other than gShen-rab is different from the Buddhist term *bstan bcos* (*śāstra*).

Although the first systematic collection and codificaiton of the Buddhist Kanjur and Tenjur took place in the early thirteenth century in the monastery of sNar-thang under the initative of bCom-ldan rig-ral, the systematic collection and actual editing of the Bonpo Canon took place only in the middle of the eighteenth century in rGyal-rong. It was Kun-grol grags-pa (b. 1700), a well known Bonpo scholar who made an inventory of the Canon. He was tutor to Nam-mkha' rgyal-po, the king of Rab-brtan principality. The king began to make blocks of the scriptures, but towards the end of the eighteenh century a certain number of them were burned. However by the 1850's the carving of the blocks of the Bonpo Canon was completed. Xylographic editions of the scriptures reproduced from the Khro-skyabs blocks made their way into the monasteries in Amdo and in Central Tibet in such places as sMan-ri and g.Yung-drung-gling, but they never seem to have reached anywhere outside Tibet. Manuscript editions of the Canon are said to exist at least in twenty-eight Bonpo monasteries mostly situated in Hor and Khyung-po, but it is unnecessary to go through the long list of the monasteries here. We shall be content with what two Western travellers report. In 1922 J. F. Rock, the American scholar saw a manuscript set of the Bonpo Canon in a temple in the district of Tso-so in the extreme south-eastern region of Tibet. G. Roerich, the Russian Tibetologist, came across another set of manuscripts in the monastery of Sharugon, this time in north-eastern Tibet in 1928. He further reports that in this monastery manuscripts of the Bonpo Kanjur consisted of 140 volumes and the Tenjur 160.[35]

Outside Tibet we do not have any copies of inventories of the Bonpo Canon, like the one made by Kun-grol grags-pa, though no doubt several of them existed. However, with the coming of Tibetan refugees to India in 1959, the Bonpo monk lJong-sdong Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin brought on his back amongst other works a very detailed catalogue of the

33. Kvaerne, 1974: 39.

34. *T* Vol. 145, No. 5851.
35. Kvaerne, 1974: 19.

Bonpo Canon. This was later published in volume 37 in Śatapitaka series by Lokesh Chandra in 1965. This *dkar chag* was made by the famous 22nd abbot of sMan-ri monastery, Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin (b. 1813). The exact date of this *dkar chag* is not known, but at any rate, it cannot be before 1836. Dr. Per Kvaerne, the Norwegian Indologist and Tibetologist, has recenlty made a through study of this *dkar chag* and published the work in the Indo-iranian Journal.[36] This extremely useful work will be indispensable for any future research in Bonology. According to the *dkar chag* there are 113 volumes of the *bKa' 'gyur* and 293 of the *bKa' brten.*

Let us now turn our attention to the structural problem of the Canon. We have already spoken about the Bonpo classificaton of the doctrines of gShen-rab: the four Portals and the Treasury as the fifth. But in the *mDo 'dus* gShen-rab is said to have ordered his disciples to classify his words into four divisions. The *dkar chag* of Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin strictly adheres to this system:

1 *mDo*
vols. 1 to 46 consist of texts dealing in the main with monastic discipline, cosmology, hagiographical literature and prayers.
2 *'Bum*
vols. 47 to 66 consist mainly of the *khams chen* literature.
3 *rGyud*
vols. 67 to 107 contain mainly esoterical teachings.
4 *mDzod*
vols. 108 to 113 comprise rDzogs chen philosophy.

The *'Bum* division is nothing but a complete borrowing of the Buddhist Prajñāpāramitā whilst the *mDo* and *rGyud* divisions respectively correspond to the Buddhist terms sūtra and tantra. The *mDzod* does not have any connection with Abhidharmakośa as one might expect, but has a certain affiliation to the rDzogs chen of the rNying-ma-pa.

The *bKa' brten* part of the Canon which has 293 volumes deals with the rituals and their narratives, commentaries of all kinds, and works connected with the arts, logic, medicine and astrology.

### 5. The Origin of the World

In the Bon religion the world is said to have ultimately emerged from several eggs, but there is no unified account. There are as many variatons as texts. Even within one work the accounts differ from chapter to chapter. This may be very frustrating for those who seek an etablished pattern and wish to present a complete Bonpo theory of the universe. The

36. See note 1.



number of egg is sometimes two and at other times five or even nine and the process of hatching eggs varies from one version to the other as do the number of beings who emerge from them. The Bonpo rituals normally begin with a narrative of how the world or gods or demons came into existence and these narratives are different almost every time even with texts about the same god or demon. However, we may establish a general schema within these scattered and diverse accounts by basing ourselves on the *mDzod phug*.[37]It is in the main a work of cosmogony, but also contains what we might call metaphysics. It has seventeen chapters. The first six are about the origin of world and the remaining nine chapters are devoted to metaphysics.

The work is considered to be *bka'*, the word of gShen-rab, and therefore, is placed in the Bonpo Canon, and is said to have been translated into Tibtan from the language of Zhang-zhung by the Zhang-zhung master sTong-rgyung mthu-chen and the Tibetan Bonpo Sha-ri dbu-chen in Bye-ma-la g·yung-drung chu-mig brgyad-cu rtsa-gnyis. This place is described as situated on the frontier of Zhang-zhung and Tibet (*bod dang zhang zhung gi ru mtshams*). Whatever its origin, the text is bilingual and in verse. It was included in the rediscovery made in 1017 by gShen-chen Klu-dga' whom we have already met in a previous lecture (No.3). Amongst the many commentaries on this text, *GG* is considered to be the most important. It is attributed to Dran-pa nam-mkha' (eighth century A.D.), but was rediscovered by rMa-ston Jo-lcam later in the twelfth century.[38] These two works were published in one volume by Tenzin Namdak in India.[39] Here I shall give a résumé of the passage concerned with the origin of the world according to the commentary (p. 51):

> "In the beginnig of the beginning there was Nam-mkha' stong-ldan phyod-sum-rje who posessed the lees of the five causes. From him the father Khri-rgyal khug-pa collected them to his body and uttered softly 'ha' from which sprang wind. As the wind circled fast in the form of a wheel of light there came fire, and As the wind blew hard the hotter the fire became. Dew was produced from the heat of the fire and the coolness of the wind. On the drops of dew atoms clustered. These in turn were stirred by the wind which travelled about in space causing the accumulation of particles to grow to the size of mountains. The world was in this way created by the father Khri-rgyal khug-pa (*alias* mNgon-rdzogs rgyal-po). From the essence of the five causes an egg of light and an egg of darkness were produced. The egg of light was cubic and as big as a yak. The egg of darkness was in the shape of a pyramid and the

37. Kvaerne, 1974: K 2; Karmay, 1977: No.1.
38. Kvaerne, 1974: T 19; Karamy, 1977: No.1,2.
39. *mDzod phug:* basic verses and commentary, Delhi 1966.

size of an ox. The father broke the egg of light with a wheel of light. From the clashing of the wheel and the egg sparks of light scattered into space producing the *'thor gsas* gods and rays of light shone downwards producing the *bdar gsas* gods. From the heart of the egg emerged Srid-pa Sangs-po 'bum-khri, a white man with turquoise hair. He was the king of the world of existence. bsKal-pa med-'bum nag-po (who stands in opposition to father Khri-rgyal khug-pa) caused the egg of darkness to burst in the realm of darkness. Black light went up producing ignorance and fog. Black rays went down producing torpor and madness. From the heart of the egg sprang a man of black light. He was called Mun-pa zer-ldan nag-po and was the king of the world of non-existence. These two are the fathers of gods and demons.

From the five causes dew and rain were produced and these became the oceans. As the wind blew and moved the waters of the oceans a bubble the size of a tent sprang up onto the surface containing a blue egg of light. When it burst by itself a turquoise blue woman appeared. Sangs-po 'bum-khri gave her the name of Chu-lcam rgyal-mo. They coupled without bowing their heads and without touching noses and produced wild animals, beasts, and birds. They united bending their heads and touching noses and nine brothers and nine sisters were born to them."

It is perhaps not necessary here to go through all the names of the brothers and sisters. We shall only consider the important role they play in forming the original structure of the world and its environment. The father, Sangs-po 'bum-khri, assigns each of his children to a particular role. The nine brothers causes nine female partners to appear as their wives while the nine sister create nine male partners as their husbands. The first three of the nine brothers are more important than the others. They are usually referred to as *phyva srid skos gsum*. Srid-rje 'Brang-dkar's duty is to ensure the continuation of the world. He has nine sons called the nine gods of heaven (*gnam*) and nine daughters called the nine goddesses of heaven. The nine gods of heaven are the primary ancestors of the clan dMu. These nine gods are also called *gnam gyi then dgu*. gShen-rab is considred to be a descendant of this clan. sKos-rje Drang-dkar is ordered to assign beings and things with their functions and their opposites, for example medicine for illness, but also demons for men. He produced eight sons known as the eight gods of the earth and eight daughters, the eight goddesses of the earth. Phyva-rje Ring-dkar (*alias* Phyva-rje sKye-'dzin) is to look after the lives of living beings. He has eight children, four sons and four daughters. The second son is Phyva-rje



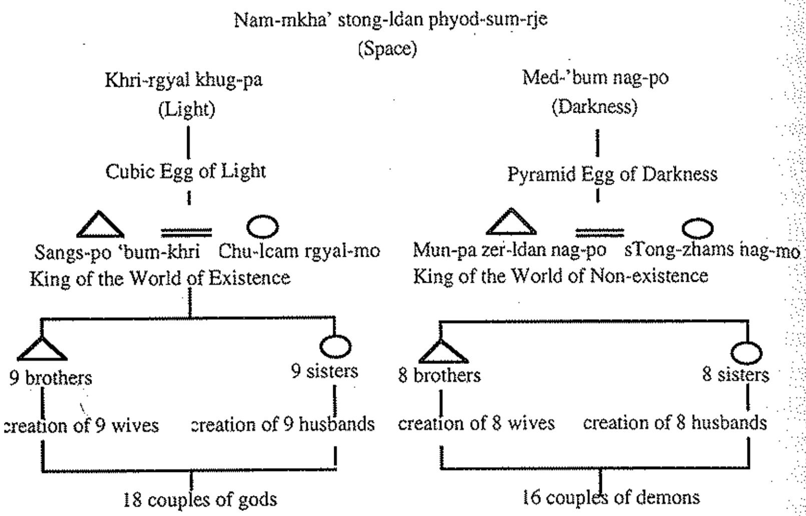
Ya-bla bdal-drug, the progenitor of the Tibetan kings. Sangs-po 'bum-khri's fourth son, gNyan-rum gnam-dkar is the original ancestor of the moutain gods. The remaining brothers in their turn are ancestors of various beings. Whilst these brothers are called the nine males of the world (*srid pa pho dgu*), their sisters are known as the nine females of the world (*srid pa mo dgu*). The first of these sisters is gNam-phyi gung-rgyal. She occupies a very important place in the Bonpo pantheon, which we shall discuss in a later lecture (No.6). The second sister, gNam-sman dkar-mo is again an interesting figure. She has become a Bonpo guardian of the esoteric teachings. She also plays an important role in the Gesar epic as the ant of Gesar. It was from the third sister Mi-mkhan ma-mo, and her husband rDzi-ba dung-phyur that man descended. The couple had eight offspring who are the original progenitors of man. The fifth sister, Shed-za Na-ma is the goddess of life. She has twelve offspring, amongst which we find the *pho lha* Mi-rdzi, the *ma lha* Bu-rdzi, the *zhang lha* Drin-chen and the *sgra bla* Dar-ma.[40] When the *srog lha* Nyams-chen is added to these four, the group is known as *'go yi lha lnga*. The *srog lha* is a son of the seventh sister. Each human being has these gods by nature. The *srog lha* resides on the head, the *pho lha* on the right-hand shoulder, the *ma lha* on the left-hand shoulder, the *sgra bla* in front of the head and the *zhang lha* at the back of the head. The seventh sister, Phyva-tshe rgyal-mo, is the mother of the gods of horses, yaks, sheep, goats, and the door, and of the goddesses of cows and the hearth.

Like the brothers, all the sisters have special duties assigned to them by their father. The parents and the eighteen offspring constitute the original ancestors of the host of Bonpo gods. Many of the divinities in Bon and Tibetan lamaism whose origin is not Indian can be traced back to this genealogy.

Mun-pa zer-ldan, the demon, created sTong-zhams nag-mo out of his own shadow and she was born in the middle of a moonless night. So she is called the Queen of Darkness. From their union eight brothers and eight sisters were born. They are known as *lha srin*. The term *lha srin* here is to be understood as *lha ma srin*, i.e. beings who are not quite gods nor demons. The eight brothers, too, create their own female partners and the eight sisters their male partners. Many more demons were born from these sixteen couples. These represent the Bonpo demonological world.

40. For references see n. 64.

Here is a diagram of how the original genealogy appears:




The idea of the eggs as the primeval source of gods and demons is quite unique to Bon in Tibet. We do not find any such conception in Buddhist cosmogony. Whle the influence of Zoroasterianism is perhaps apparent in the Bonpo dualisitc structure of the world, the idea of the eggs seems to have a different origin. In Zoroasterianism Ahura Mazda was originally the creator of the whole world including the demons, but later there were different sectarian developments in this religion. Some maintained that the prmeval principle was Time, but according to others it was Space which created the gods including Ahura Mazda and the demons. In the Bonpo theory, there is no indication of Time, but Space plays an important role in the coming into existence of the world, its personification being Nam-mkha' stong-ldan phyod-sum-rje. He is invisible and passive. In later Bonpo tradition he is stylised as *bon sku* which corresponds to *chos sku* (*dharmakāya*). Khri-rgyal khug-pa, also called mNgon-rdzogs rgyal-po, the king who posseses clarity, is one and the same as gShen-lha 'Od-dkar. He is therefore visible and active. He is stylised as *longs sku* (*sambhogakāya*). He is the primary mover, but he himself was moved by a strong wish, because he perceived that Med-'bum nag-po, the Black, Hundred-thousand Non-existence, intended to create a world full of misery so he acted promptly by collecting the lees of the five causes from Nam-mkha' stong-ldan phyod-sum-rje. With the lees he created the world, but not the 'being' which were born to Srid-pa Sangs-po 'bum-khri. To these two figures, Khri-rgyal khug-pa and Sangs-po 'bum-khri, gShen-rab Mi-bo is added as the guide of living beings, thus



forming the Bonpo triad which we have had occasion to mention (lecture No.2). When we say that Khri-rgyal khug-pa created the world, it is not the same as the creation of the God of Christianity or Islam where God creates the world out of nothing. The idea of omnipotence does not exist in the Bonpo tradition. It is not a myth of creation; but rather of procreation. For example, each of the sons of Sangs-po 'bum-khri creates independently a female partner. The goddesses simply appear as a result of their desire. The Tibetan verb for this is *sprul ba* which in Buddhist texts is normally translated by 'incarnate' or 'emanate'. Here *sprul ba* has the connotation of causing to appear.

There are four heavens in the Bonpo tradition. They are known as *gnas rigs chen po bzhi*, the four great residences. The first one is called Srid-pa gung-sangs. It is a place where the gods gather together and discuss who is going to descend and be the guide or ruler on the earth. The second is Srid-pa ye-sangs, residence of Srid-pa Sangs-po 'bum-khri. The third is Bar-lha 'od-gsal where the gods purify themselves before descending to or when they return from the world. The fourth is the highest heaven and is called mGon-btsun (or mtshun)-phyva.[41] It is the heaven of Khri-rgyal khug-pa. In this heaven there is a city known as sNar-ma glegs-bzhi where the god Phyva-rje Ring-dkar (*alias* Phyva-rje sGam-po) rules. It is in this place that the gods receive their educaton and study the Bon of Srid-pa stong-rtsis, the calculation of the one thousand worlds. The three boys whom we met in a previous lecture studied Bon in this place. Phyva-rje Ya-bla bdal-drug, the primary ancestor of the Tibetan kings is considered to be residing in this city.

Med-'bum nag-po, the demon, lives in the north in a region called Mun-pa zer-ldan-gyi khams, situated to the north of the heavens. The four heavens and the dwelling place of the demons in the north again echo ideas in the Persian religion. This idea of the demons living in the north is alo reflected in the Ge-sar epic. Even if Khri-rgyal khug-pa corresponds to Ahura Mazda, it is rather difficult to see how other Bon deities, Sangs-po 'bum-khri, for example, correspond to any of the other gods in Zoroasterianism. This religion itself has gone through tremendous change. The number of gods and demons and their functions are almost totally different from those in Bon. I do not pretend to know the ancient Persian religion well enough to make a thorough comparative study, but there seems to be a good deal of parallel ideas of duality. The duality of light and darkness, white and black, good and evil, gods and demons, the

41. Shar-rdza bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan (1859-1934), *sDe snod rin-po che'i mdzod yid bzhin 'byung ba'i gter*, vol. I, (Delhi, 1972), p. 194.

world of existence and non-existence, creation and destruction forms one of the fundamental tenets of the Bonpo doctrines. Any ritual or ceremony the Bonpo perform for the benefit of others or oneself is viewed from this angle of dualism. Gods should triumph over demons and good over evil.

The position of man is rather precarious. Although he is closely connected with gods by birth he should neither offend the gods nor the demons, but should the demons bully man he can seek aid from the gods who must at any cost triumph over their adversaries. As he is descended from the gods man naturally seeks protection from them, but in the ame way as man is connected with the gods, there is no complete separation between gods and demons except that they represent opposing forces. Man is born with these two forces within him. He is therefore contested by them. These two forces are called *lhan cig skyes pa'i lha dang bdud*, gods and demons that were born together with oneself. Man is governed by these two forces. His actions are determined by these external forces rather than by internal ones and previous actions. When Buddhism became the dominant belief, the idea of gods and demons that were born with oneself gradually merged with the idea of *karma*. Still later, this idea converged with the concept of innate intelligence and ignorance (*lhan cig skyes pa'i rig pa dang ma rig pa*) in rDzogs chen philosophy.

The Bonpo must have received these influences quite early on. Probably when Zhang-zhung was still an independent state. Although the Buddist teachings in the *mDzod phug* outweigh the Bon beliefs, the bilingual and archaic composition on the cosmological orgin of the world is no doubt very ancient. The work represents a typical synthesis of Bon and Buddhism.

### 6. The Bonpo Pantheon

The Bonpo Pantheon is a vast assembly of divinities whose origins may be variously traced to Zhang-zhung, India, China probably Persia, and Tibet itself. However, while no organised collection has been made of the entire range, what the Bonpo do have are collections of comparatively small groups of divinities. I shall first indicate quite briefly the various groups of divinities and the forms their representations take, before going on to talk about the history of some of the important ones.

There are many different sets of divinities belonging to particular rituals. There are also hagiogrpahical representations of the lives of Bonpo sages. These are normally found in the form of *thangka* paintings. Another means of representation is on miniature cards called *tsa ka li*. These are used in rituals and are normally in sets of a particular cycle of divinities. The largest set of woodblocks that I have seen is the representation of gShen-rab's life comprising about thirty woodblocks made in Khro-skyabs principality in rGyal-rong. In the same place there



existed the woodblocks of the twelve divinites known as *cho ga bcu gnyis kyi lha*, the divinities of the twelve rituals. The commonest of all Bonpo divinities belong to the group of four known as *bder gshegs gtso bzhi*, the Four Principal Divinities. *bDer gshegs* is of course a Buddhist term (*sugata*). These four are usually depicted in *thangka* and frescos, and a set of *thangka* of these divinities could be found in almost every temple. Images, *thangka*, and wall-paintings of individual Bonpo divinities could be found everywhere in Bonpo communities, in the same way as with religious works of art of all schools all over Tibet.

In examining the origins and roles played by the divinities of the Bonpo pantheon it is important to grasp that there is a systematised structure to which they all, with one or two exceptions, relate, this being the original genealogy of the Bonpo divinities as exemplified in the *mDzod phug*. To illustrate this we shall take the Four Principal Divinities, and some other important ones as examples. The four are:

1. Sa-trig er-sangs
2. gShen-lha 'Od-dkar
3. Sangs-po 'bum-khri
4. gShen-rab Mi-bo

The later three constitute the Bonpo triad which we mentioned in an earlier lecture (No.3). gShen-lha 'Od-dkar is one and the same as Khri-rgyal khug-pa, the primaeval god, whilst Sangs-po 'bum-khri is the primary father of gods and other beings, in the mythology of the procreation. However, in the triad, gShen-lha has the function of the master, whereas Sangs-po is companion to gShen-rab and gShen-rab himself is the guide or saviour of this world. As for the first of the four, Sa-trig er-sangs, this is another name for Chu-lcam rgyal-mo, the primary mother of beings. Her function as member of the four is as the Great Mother of all divinities (*yum chen*), which corresponds to Prajñā in Buddhism, the Mother of all the Buddhas. Chu-lcam rgyal-mo fitted easily into this complementary role. Sa-trig er-sangs is said to be a Zhang-zhung name meaning Shes-rab byams-ma,Wisdom, the Loving Mother. It has been suggested that term *byams ma* was made up by the Bonpo on the model of Byams-pa (Maitreya).[42] This may be so, but if the word *byams pa* already existed in the Tibetan language, then *byams ma* may well have been current too, before the Bonpo came to call her by this name. The Four Principal Divinities are described as *zhi ba'i lha*, the tranquil divinities, and they are the chief ones mentioned in *ZM*.[43]

42. Snellgrove and Richardson, 1968: 109.
43. Vol. Ka, Chap. 9, f. 173 *et seq.*

As for the wrathful divinities, there are five main ones, known as *gsas mkhar mchog lnga*, the Five Excellent Ones of the *gsas* Citadel. The first three of these are:

1. dBal-gsas rngam-pa
2. lHa-rgod thog-pa
3. gTso-mchog mkha'-'gying

These are known as the Triple Tantric Divinities of the Bonpo pantheon. The first and the third are only different aspects of the second. lHa-rgod thog-pa is consort of gNm-phyi gung-rgyal, the first of the nine sisters. She is also consort of the other two, but in each case she has a different name. The exegetical literature of these divinities is abundant, but the texts most worth mentioning are the *Khro bo rgyud drug*[44]and *dBal gsas ting mur g.yu rtse'i rgyud*.[45] These have been published in India very recently. Although these divinities iconographically resemble those of the Buddhist pantheon, their origin is not Indian at all, but go back to the orignal Bonpo genealogy. None of the exegeses and liturgical texs of these divinities seem to date back beyond the tenth century A.D.

The fourth divinity of the group is Ge-khod. This divinity was originally a mountain deity residing on Mt Ti-se. He therefore originates from Zhang-zhung. His name is occasionaly preceded by *sku bla* which is also an epithet of other mountain deities. According to a myth, he descended from the heavens on to Mt Ti-se in the form of a fearful yak and then disappeared into the mountain.[46] This deity gradually rose to the status of *yi dam*, tutelary divinity in the Bonpo pantheon. Since then he has been a wrathful divinity with multiple heads and arms embracing his consort in *yab yum*. A fantastic name is conferred on him: Ge-khod bdud-'dul gsang-ba drag-chen, Ge-khod, the Subduer of Demons, the Great Terrifying One of the Secrets. As he has three hundred and sixty subordinate divinities, G. Tucci thinks that Ge-khod has some connection with the astrological gods.[47] Ge-khod also has connection with the divination gods in the *Zhang zhung ju thig* texts where the 360 gods are represented by the 360 knots of the thirty-six strings (*mdud lha*). There is a set of five treatises known as the *bDud 'dul ge khod kyi rgyud lnga*,[48] but unfortunately the existence of these so far has not been reported anywhere outside Tibet.

The fifth divinity of the group is Phur-pa (Kīla). This divinity is not only worshiped by the Bonpo but also by the rNying-ma-pa and Sa-

44. Kvaerne, 1974: K 72; Karmay, 1977: No.17.
45. Kvaerne, 1974: K 75.
46. *DzG*, ff. 547-549).
47. Tucci, 1949: 724.
48. Kvaerne, 1974: K 89.



skya-pa. Its origin is probably Indian, but this has been a controversial subject ever since the eleventh century among Buddhists in Tibet. The central point of the controversy is the authenticity of the Indian origin of Phur-pa. According to the rNying-ma-pa tradition the cult was first introduced into Tibet by Padmasambhava. This assertion was rejected first by the prince-monk Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od in his edict issed in 1092 A.D. In his opinion the cult was invented purely by the Tibetans and therefore cannot have the same effective value as a work of Indian origin. Other critics followed him until Sa-paṇ Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan came across a Sanskrit manuscript of the tantra[49] in Shangs sreg-shing in gTsang. He made a translation of it and, as a result of this, the critics of Phur-pa were silenced. The text is supposed to be only part (*dum bu*) of a large tantra which never reached Tibet, even if it really existed in India. As late as the nineteenth century Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho (1813-99) wrote a commentary on this tantra and it is the only commentary that is known so far.[50] A history of Phur-pa by Sog-zlog-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (*alias* Nam-mkhar spyod-pa, 1552-1624), a rNying-ma-pa polemic writer, is published.[51] There is also a short history of the *Phur pa rgyud lugs* by 'Jigs-med gling-pa (1729-1798).[52]

Many systems of the cult of Phur-pa have been developed according to different traditions among the Buddhists, such as the system of the king, the system of the queen etc. The one followed by the Sa-skya-pa school is called *Phur pa 'khon lugs*. The chief divinity of this last mentioned system is rDo-rje gzhon-nu (Vajrakumāra). He does not take the form of *phur bu* (*kīla*), but has a human body with extra heads and arms and he holds a *phur bu* in the principal pair of hands. The usual form of *phur bu* itself is a dagger with human head and arms, the lower part of the body being a triple edged dagger. This was originally conceived of as a tantric implement in India and then gradually found its way into Buddhist tantra such as *Guhyasamāja*[53] and *Vajramāla*.[54]In these tantra, *phur pa* is still primarily an implement. It is to be made of various material wood, iron and even human bone. However, the interesting question is when this implement was developed into a divinity. Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od critisized the texts such as *Phur pa myang 'das chen po'i rgyud*. In this tantra the

49. *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu* (*K* Vol. 3, No. 70).
50. Its title is: *dPal rdo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu'i 'grel ba snying po bsdus pa dpal chen dgyes pa'i zhal lung*. There is a dPal-spungs edition.
51. *dPal rdo rje phur pa'i lo rgyus ngo mtshar rgya mtsho'i rba rlabs*, Ngagyur nyingmay sungrab series, Vol. 15, Text b. (Gangtok, 1969).
52. *Chos 'byung ngo mtshar snang byed*, Ngagyur nyingmay sungrab series,Vol. 34, (Gangtok 1971).
53. *K* Vol. 3, No. 81, Chap. 14, f. 131b.
54. *ibid.*, Vol. 3, No. 82, Chap. 53, f. 216a.

implement is treated as a divinity. It is therefore clear that the cult of Phur-pa goes back to a date earlier than the eleventh century.

The rNying-ma-pa tradition which maintains that the cult of Phur-pa was brought to Nepal and then to Tibet by Padmasambhava is supported by *PT* 44. In this manuscript *phur bu* the implement is held in the hands of Vajrakumāra, but it is also described as a maṇḍala-like dwelling where various divinities reside. While the chief divinity is Vajrakumāra in certain systems of the rNying-ma-pa and Sa-skya-pa, in other rNying-ma-pa systems and those of the Bonpo, *phur bu* the implement itself has become the central divinity, Phur-pa. There was a distinction between the term *phur bu* which seems to mean the implement and *phur pa* the deity, but the words were used so freely that the resulting confusion reached to an extent where no difference is made in later texts.

The mythical justification of the Phur-pa cycle of the Bonpo is as follows. At a certain time in the past there was a king who had twin sons. One called sTag-la me-'bar who was good and the other Dha-sha ghri-ba who was bad. The latter began to do everything against his parents so that sTag-la me-'bar was obliged to take their side and fight against his own brother. However, his brother being too powerful, sTag-la felt helpless. At that moment the great mother Byams-ma appeared to him and told him that unless he invoked the Phur-pa divinities he would never be able to subdue his brother. As a result of his invocation sTag-la was able to subdue the brother. This story seems to have some connection with the Rāmāyana, but while Dha-sha ghri-ba is undoubtedly a Tibetan transliteration of Daśagrīva (mGrin-bcu), nothing suggests that sTag-la me-'bar can be identified with Rāma (dGa'-byed). Whatever the case may be, the exegetical literature and the liturgical texts of the Phur-pa cycle produced by the Bonpo are no less numerically than those of the rNying-ma-pa. The central theme of the liturgical texts of Phur-pa is to bring one's own opponent into submission.

The date of the introduction of this Buddhist magic rite into the Bonpo tradition goes back to the eleventh century when the Bonpo *gter ston* Khu-tsha Zla-'od (b. 1024) who is also a rNying-ma-pa *gter ston* claimed that he rediscovered the nine *rgyud* of Phur-pa in sPa-gro (Paro, Bhutan).[55] The brand that is sometimes given to the Bonpo is that they are addicted to magic practices. To speak with fairness and with knowledge of both sides they are no more addicted to such practices than their fellow Buddhists. Evidence of this is provided by the complete borrowing of the magic rites of Phur-pa from the Buddhists.

55. Kvaerne, 1974: K 86.



Besides the *yi dam* there are many religious guardians. These are called *bka' skyong*, the Protectors of the Word. The ones, who are invoked by the majority of the Bonpo, are the three Ma, bDud and bTsan.

Ma stands for Ma-mchog Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo, the Excellent Mother, the Queen of the World. According to Bonpo tradition she is one and the same as Chu-lcam rgyal-mo who took the form of a religious guardian, but at the same time she is analogous to dPal-ldan lha-mo (Śrīdevī), the Buddhist version of the Indian goddess Durgādevī. However, until detailed comparative research has been made we cannot know with certainty the origin of this goddess. At any rate, gShen-chen Klu-dga' (996-1035) was the first to introduce the cult of the goddess as a religious protector into the Bonpo tradition



*Plate 10: dMu-bdud. sNang-zhig-dgon, rNga-khog, Amdo. (SGK 1985)*

bDud stands for dMu-bdud 'Byams-pa khrag-mgo. This figure is very obscure. He is a demon and therefore should belong to the original genealogy, but he is difficult to be identified with any of the demons there. The liturgical text vaguely indicates that he came from Mi-nyag and the country of Nam-pa-ldong. The origin of this guardian is therefore very uncertain at present. The liturgical text dates back to the twelfth century.



*Plate 11: bTsan, sKyang-tshang-dgon, Shar-khog, Amdo. (SGK 1985)*

bTsan stands for bTsan-rgyal Yang-ni-ver. The *btsan* are normally spirits of the rocks. The legend behind Yang-ni-ver is very complicated. In the legend he is associated with Li, but it is not certain whether this Li has any connection with Khotan.[56] The liturgical texts go back to the twelfh century.

The most recent one among the *bka' skyong* is Grags-pa seng-ge. The intriguing history of this protector is perhaps worth going into in some detail. The Tenth Zhva-dmar-pa of the Karmapa order, Chos-grags rgya-mtsho (1742-1792) got into trouble with the Tibetan government, because he was involved in the Gorkha invasion of Tibet in 1792. So the Tibetan government confiscated all his property including his monastery, Yangs-pa-can, which is a few miles to the north of mTshur-phu, the seat of the Zhva-nag-pa. They dismantled the institution of the incarnation line by banning recognition of any future incarnated lamas of the Zhva-dmar-pa. When Chos-grags rgya-mtsho died his spirit was supposed to have become the chief of malignant spirits in Tibet. So the abbot of sMan-ri monastery, Shes-rab dgongs-rgyal (1784-1835) summoned him along with other spirits and made him take an oath to become a Bonpo religious protector in sMan-ri. In the invocation text especially composed by the

56. *Cf.* Stein, 1959: 24.



abbot in praise of this protector he evoked the story of gShen-chung Go-bo to make the necessary link between himself and this protector for the Bonpo. gShen-chung Go-bo was a son of the demon Khyab-pa lag-ring, but was born to one of gShen-rab's wives. The wife did not know when the demon had come to her in the disguise of gShen-rab. Although gShen-chung Go-bo was the son of demon he was looked after by a disciple of gShen-rab, g.Yung-drung gtsug-gshen rgyal-ba and became very learned. Later he took nine births of the Zhva-dmar-pa line and when he took birth as the tenth his former teacher the disciple of gShen-rab became the abbot of sMan-ri. The abbot therefore had no difficulty in summoning the spirit and making him a protector. He called the protector Grags-pa seng-ge, the name of the first Zhva-dmar-pa lama (1283-1349). The protector therefore takes the form of a Buddhist monk holding a banner and wishing jewel and mounted on a horse.



*Plate 12: Grags-pa seng-ge, sKyang-tshang-dgon, Shar-khog, Amdo (SGK 1985)*

Deifying the spirits of well known people and making them into religious protectors was quite a common phenomenon in Tibet. The abbot of sMan-ri was not the first to initiate such a practice. The making of the spirit of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan into a dGe-lugs-pa religious protector

known as rDo-rje shugs-ldan took place before the abbot was born. Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan was third in the incarnation line of Pan-chen bSod-nams grags-pa (1478-1554), one of the greatest authorities of the dGe-lugs-pa order. The seat of this line was in 'Bras-spungs and was kown as gZims-khang gong-ma (The Upper Chamber) whereas the seat of the incarnation line of the Grand Abbot of 'Bras-spungs, the future Dalai lamas, was gZims-khang 'og-ma (The Lower Chamber). When the Grand Abbot of 'Bras-spungs, Yon-tan rgya-mtsho (1589-1617), the 4th Dalai Lama, died, two boys were put forward as candidates for the incarnation. One was Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan and the other Kun-dga' 'gyur-med who actually became the Fifth Dalai Lama. However, there were opposing factions. Many disputed that Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan was the real incarnation. This quarrel did not settle for a considerable time. Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan eventually emerged as the third incarnation of Pan-chen bSod-nams grags-pa. As there were many Tibetans and Mongols, who believed that he was the real incarnation of the Fourth Dalai Lama, to them he was now the embodiment of both the great scholar bSod-nams grags-pa and the Fourth Dalai Lama. This was quite a serious threat to the position of the Fifth Dalai Lama who however eventually succeeded in eliminating the rival even though both belonged to the same monastery and to the dGe-lugs-pa school. However, the circumstances of the death of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan are not clearly recorded. Further to justify his death, there is the story that long before in a previous birth he had made a vow to become a religious protector of the teachings of Tsongkhapa. Because of this vow he had to die in order to become the protector Shugs-ldan in the dGe-lugs-pa monasteries. This protector also takes the form of a Buddhist monk like the Bonpo protective divinity, Grags-pa seng-ge.[57]

When I was in 'Bras-spungs from 1956 to 59 I noticed that the cult of Shugs-ldan was very popular particularly in the college of Blo-gsal-gling, but the names gZims-khang gong-ma and 'og-ma were no longer used. gZims-khang 'og-ma was known by the name dGa'-ldan pho-brang which was originally the name of the building. It was later used as the name of the Tibetan government when the Fifth Dalai Lama became political leader of Tibet. The name gZims-khang gong-ma seems to have disappeared together with its occupant in the seventeenth century.

## 7. The Bonpo Rituals

The rituals in Bon religion are immensely rich in quantity and variety. Apart from some funeral rituals found among the Dunhuang manuscripts no research has so far been made in this field. Yet rituals are

57. *VS*, part I, p. 72. Also bTsun-pa Ma-ti, *rGyal ba'i bstan srung chen po rdo rje shugs ldan rtsal gyi byung tshul mdo tsam brjod pa pad dkar chun po*, ed. 'Bras go-bo-khang, f. 19a *et seq.*



extremely important for understanding the working of the human mind in ancient times.

All rituals are grouped in the first four of the nine *theg pa* :

1. the *theg pa* of prediction (*phya gshen theg pa*)
2. the *theg pa* of the visual world (*snang gshen theg pa*)
3. the *theg pa* of existence (*srid gshen theg pa*)
4. the *theg pa* of illusion (*'phrul gshen theg pa*)

The first *theg pa* is further divided into four categories:

1. *mo*, divination
2. *rtsis*, astrology
3. *gto*, rites
4. *dpyad*, diagnoses

It is the *gto* that we are concerned with here. This normally consists of two parts: the narrative followed by the rite. The narrative is a mythical account of a certain event that took place at the beginning of the world. It is narrated in order to recreate the atmosphere of the story. In the narrative the priest asserts that he is a follower of his forefathers, and therefore has the same effectiveness in calling on the gods or in exorcising the demons. The narratives usualy have a connction with the original genealogy. This is also a means to justify the action that the priest takes in the process of the ritual.

There are many everday rituals, but the most common ones are: rituals for marriage, ensuring the continuation of posterity, prolonging life, increasing wealth, summoning good fortune, averting misfortune, bringing in a good harvest and for the dead. Four simultaneous stages are involved in the procedure for executing a ritual, 1. divination, 2. astrology, 3. ritual, 4. diagonoses. For example, if someone is ill, one first goes to a diviner (*mo ba*) who consults his divination manual to see whether the patient is afflicted by any malignant spirits (*gdon*), if so, according to the result of his divination he advises the kind of ritual to be performed in order to pacify the spirit. After this an astrologer (*rtsis pa*) examines whether the patient's birth star and other planets are in order and whether his favourable and adverse elements that are connected with his birth star have come into conflict. The astrologer then recommends a date on which the ritual should take place. Whilst the consultation with the diviner and astrologer is in process the patient is referred to a physician who diagnoses (*dpyad*) his illness. This four-fold method is extended to cover all the everyday problems of ordinary people. This type of method is considered to be one of the essential practices of the Bon religion. The *gto* is probably quite effective at least on the psychological side whereas the *dpyad* deals purely with the physical side of the patient.

All rituals begin with purification which consists of three parts. 1. The removal of the poison (*dug phyung*), 2. purification through the springkling of waters, and 3. purification by fumigation.

Let us deal first wth the removal of the poison. This is usually affiliated to the mythological origin of the world. As we have seen there are two forces, gods and demons. The gods side is called Ye and the demon's Ngam. Ye-rje sMon-pa (*alias* Khri-rgyal khug-pa) is the Lord of Ye and Ngam-rje rTsol-po (*alias* Med-'bum nag-po) is the Lord of Ngam. There is a frontier between the two forces called *srid pa ye ngam gnyis kyi so mtshams*, the frontier between the worlds of Ye and Ngam. The poison comes from Ngam. Here I shall translate a passage which describes the origin of the poison.

"He! This poison, where did it come from?
It came into existence from the land of Ngam,
The bile of Ngam-rje rTsol-po,
Burst in the land of Ngam,
There an ocean of poison flew in circles,
The Man of Ngam, the Black One (Ngam-mi nag-po) took care of it,
From this ocean of Ngam poison grew fast,
So the seed of poison came into existence from Ngam,
From this seed nine kinds of poisonous seeds appeared."[58]

The text then enumerates several kinds of poisons: growing from the earth, black aconite (*bong nga nag po*), from stones *mkhar sgong* a sort of pyrites, from trees *glang ma* a kind of willow, from shrubs *thang phrom* and many others. The text does not give any explanation why the seed of poison should ultimately have come from the bile of Ngam-rje rTsol-po. At any rate, some of these supposed poisons are prepared before the rtual begins. When the priests begin to chant, the poisonous substances are burned in a small ladle which is carried to all parts of the house and then thrown away. The idea is that if any of the poisons lurk in vicinity the purification cannot be very effective.

Purification of pollution: the first pollution occured when Ye and Ngam were at war. The story goes like this: there was a tree which was neither a fruit-tree nor a plant. It grew on the frontier between Ye and Ngam. The leaves of the tree were made of silk, the fruits of gold, the juice was nectar, the bark was of cloth, the thorns were weapons and the flowers were strange to look at. Nobody noticed it. But one day, Phyva'u g.Yang-dkar climbed up on to the peak of the mountain of existence Del-dkar riding on a sheep (*g-yang mo*) and carrying a divine arrow fitted with

58. *GSD*, Text No. 3, p . 65.



white feathers in his hand. He examined the tree again and again finally realised that it wa a sign of imminent war between Ye and Ngam, and that the war would in effect be a struggle between existence and non-existence. However, he perceived that Ye would eventually be victorious. So he pronounced the result of his investigation on the summit of the world. When the war began, the army of Ye camped on the peak of Mt Del-dkar and the army of Ngam camped at the base of Mt Sol-ri (the charcoal mountain). sKos-rje Drang-dkar went to the no-man's land between Ye and Ngam (*mtshams tshigs pa gsum gyi bar ma*) and tried to mediate in the debate between the delegates of existence and non-existence. However, nothing could be settled through arguing. Then two sheep were led up to the mediator. One was lHa-tsha Ga-ba bang-mig (White faced spotted one, nephew of the gods) who was a descendant of the father rKang-'gros lug-lug and a goddess. The other sheep, Srin-tsha Khyu-sre rgal-nag (Black backed grey one, nephew of the demons) was a son of the same father and a demoness. Both sheep were turned round nine times and then let go. lHa-tsha went to the peak of Del-dkar and Srin-tsha went to the base of Sol-ri. So the gods were victorious and they said laudly *lha rgyal lo*, the gods are triumphant! Here the idea is that should lHa-tsha and Srin-tsha have made their way to the wrong destinations the gods would have been defeated, but everything went according to the system of the world (*srid pa'i lugs*).

Ngam made many kinds of weapons. The sparks from the smith's forge hit the darkness of Ngam. The vapour of the darkness of Ngam became clouds. A rain storm soaked Ye-rje sMon-pa, who did not even have a hat. So he made one of wool from the mane of lHa-ba bal-chen, the god of sheep. Ngam-rje rTsol-po shot an arrow from the darkness aiming into the eye of the Lord of Ye. It did not strike his eyes but instead got stuck in his hat. This arrow was then taken as an auspicious implement. A piece of white silk and a silver mirror were attached to it and it came to represent the 360 gods in the *Zhang zhung ju thig* divination system.

When the Ye were helpless, the Lord of Ye invoked the god Ye-mkhyen sgra-bla offering him a right fore-leg of mutton. The army of Ye-mkhyen sgra-bla took Ngam-mi nag-po prisoner and his wife dMar-mo as a slave. Ngam-mi nag-po is the keeper of the poisonous ocean.[59]

These are just a few examples of various minor incidents that took place between Ye and ngam. One of the most serious incidents is Ge-khod's slaying his own mother who was a she-demon married to a god. She had abandoned her husband and child Ge-khod and returned to the land of demons, Ngam. This action of Ge-khod caused great pollution in the

59. *ZJ*, Vol. Cha, Chap. 28, Delhi, 1965, f. 70b-73a (Kvaerne, 1974: K 5; Karmay, 1977: No.3).

world of Ye. This pollution (*sme*) and the poison that grew out of the poisonous ocean made it necessary to execute the rite of purification (*dag pa*). In purifying the pollution certain medicinal plants and other substances were needed and these were provided by the goddess gNam-phyi gung-rgyal who lives in the Milky Way and also in the lake gNam-mtsho phyug-mo. Here I shall translate the passage describing how the goddess supplies the medicine:

"Above the peak of the world where the three worlds gather,
The mother of ambrosia, gNam-phyi gung-rgyal,
Holding a vase full of ambrosia,
Wearing a shawl of ambrosia,
On her head masses of ambrosia clouds gather,
From her mouth ambrosia rains,
Spreading ambrosia all over the world,
She lives on the essence of ambrosia,
She drinks the juice of ambrosia, ...
In order to heal the sickness of beings,
And to bring the god (Ge-khod) and the owner of the god (man) together,
She sprinkled a mouthful of ambrosial spittle down on the earth,
'Praying May this be medicinal ambrosia'.

There came into existence the substances of the *tshan:*
Camphor, the medicine of snows,
Sea-foam, the medicine of water,
Yellow saffron, the medicine of meadows,
White *cong zhi*, the medicine of stone,
Brown bitumen, the medicine of rocks, ...
The medicine of the snows of Mt Ti-se,
The water of the lake of Ma-pang,
Were mixed to make the medicinal ambrosia (*tshan*),
Which was poured into a silver ladle,
But the *tshan* had no tongue,
Nor had it a horse.

The pure bird of the gods,
Surrounded by medicine,
Gong-mo, the white grouse, the medicinal bird,
Has feathers with red patterns,
Wears a shawl of *gtsos*,
Its blue neck is patterned round with the colour of slate,
A golden chisel for a beak,
It wears a pair of copper shoes,



Sings sweet sounds of *pi wang*,
Flies about the peaks of mountains,
Lives on the mountain side, in meadows, on the snows,
Fishes in the pools of ambrosia, ..."[60]



*Plate 13: gNam-phyi gung-rgyal, Dolanji, HP, India (SGK 1983)*

In this story we see that the spittle of the goddess becomes both medicine and water, the mixture of which is called *tshan*. This is considered to be the antidote to the poison of Ngam. The word *bdud rtsi* wich I have translated by ambrosia is normally used to traslate *amṛita* (not dead) in Buddhist texts, but I do not think there is any connection between the two words. The term *bdud rtsi* seems to convey the notion of the poison which grew in the land of the demons. As an antidote to this, the goddess produced medicinal substances, thus the demon's crop. The term *bdud rtsi* here has no connotation of alchemy. The function of the white grouse is to spread the *tshan*. In the ritual a feather of this bird is used to sprinkle the *tshan*, but if this is not available a branch of juniper is used instead. It is believed that the *tshan* cleansed the polluton created when Ye and Ngam were at war. So does it today if one has contracted any pollution or illness. The prticular kinds of pollution enumerated in the text are many, but some are considered to be more serious than the others: eating horse meat; touching naked human corpses with bare hands;

60. *GSD*, Text No. 5, p. 74.

mixing one's sweat with that of a woman from Ngam; sleeping with a woman who has murdered someone; and wearing clothes belonging to a man who has killed another. These are to be purified on the physical side, and spiritually one must purify one's mind, that is: one's doubts about the *lha rgod* i.e. Ge-khod.

In the purification by fumigation the narrative is identical to the previous section on the *tshan*, but the goddess gNam-phyi gung-rgyal recites a different prayer: "May the purifying trees of the *lha rgod* grow" and then sprinkles a mouth full of spittle from heaven to the earth. There grew the white *a krong* fern, the crop of the snows; *srol lo* (sedum), the crop of the mountains; *a ba*, the crop of the rocks; the white forehead *spra ba* (vegetable tinder), the crop of the meadows; the fragrant *spos mo*, the crop of the mountain side; the golden leaved *mkhan pa* fern, the crop of the cliffs; the turquoise leaved juniper, the crop of the sunny side; and the white *ba lu* rhdodendrons, the crop of the dark side of the mountain.[61]

In practice many of these fresh plants are gathered together and then burned either in a little ladle with a long handle (*skyogs*) or if it is outside the house a special small raised platform is built for the purpose. As many of the plants are difficult to get in certan regions only juniper and *mkhan pa* are actually burned. These two are sometimes referred to as *g.yu lo* and *gser lo* (turquoise leaves and golden leaves). The juniper tree is still prefered to *mkhan pa*. It is the Bonpo sacred tree and is very often called *lha shing shug pa g.yu lo*, the tree of the gods, turquoise leaved juniper. It is also one of the four everlasting symbols of Bon. The smoke of the plants, particularly that of juniper, is believed to have the effect of purifying any pollution that one has contracted. There are two different terms for pollution *sme* and *mnol*. The *sme* pollution is to be purified (*dag pa*) through the *tshan* whereas the *mnol* pollution is to be purified by fumigation (*bsang ba*). The fragrance of the burned juniper of the purification rite is also a popular offering made to the mountain deities, but the word *bsang* used for offering is the same as in the purification rite, *bsang ba* meaning to purify. The *bsang* ritual is very much developed in later centuries in Tibetan culture. The text *rNgan bsang chen mo* is a good example for this.[62] Incidentally this text is also very useful for geographical studies of Tibet, for a large number of mountain deities are invoked mentioning the locations of the mountains.

The tree which grew on the frontier between Ye and Ngam immediately brings to mind the *dpag bsam shing* (*kalpa-vṛkṣa*) contested by the *deva* and *asura* in Hindu mythology, but here it is only an omen. The ocean of poison has distant echos of the ocean of milk from which

61. *GSD*, Text No.5, p.78.

62. *Bon skyong sgrub thabs bskang gsol bcas*, Vol. II, Text No. 32. Published by Tsultrim Tashi, Delhi, 1972.



ambrosia came. gNam-phyi gung-rgyal's sprinkling her ambrosial spittle and the growing of medicine resembles the scattering of the grain by Avalokiteśvara from which six kinds of grain grew in Tibet. The white grouse and the use of its feathers remind one of the peacock in the Indian mythology where it has the capacity of destroying poisons. Its feathers are used to sprinkle the purificatory water in Buddhist ceremonies in Tibet. The use of peacock's feathers was adopted by the Bonpo in later centuries.

## 8. Marriage Ritual

The customs of marriage differ from one region to another in Tibet. They have never been studied and Tibetans themselves have hardly written anything on this subject. Consequently very little is known about it. As marriage is such a mundane affair Buddhism has no fundamental doctine for this human institution.

However, the Tibetan Buddhists devised sporadic ceremonial rituals along the lines of the Bonpo ritual when their lay devotee requested them. These have by no means a uniform character, but a good example for this is written by Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho (1813-99) as late as the nineteenth century.[63] He himself being originally a Bonpo knew very well about the Bonpo marriage rituals. He wrote this on the occasion of the marriage of the prince of Derge to a daughter of the aristocrate mDo-mkhar-ba in Central Tibet. What he has done in this little work is to organise the ritual into seven parts within the framework of the Bonpo rituals incorporating Buddhist divinites and some pieces of Indian mythology. We shall come back to this after dealing with the Bonpo ritual.

No temple or public building was needed for the marriage ceremony nor was there any customary regisration. Only occasionally a marriage contract was drawn up and sealed by the two houses and a copy kept in each house. I shall not discuss here the social aspects of marriage as these vary considerably from place to place. Before the actual marriage another ritual called *Glang chen sna bsgyur* is performed when the bride approaches the house of the bride-groom. However, I cannot go into the details of this ritual as I have no access to this text at present.

There are different texts of the Bonpo marriage ritual. Only one of them is available. It is entitled *Ming sring dpal bgos dang lha 'dogs*. The authorship is not mentioned and it is in two parts: *Ming sring dpal bgos* (the dividing of the wealth between the brother and the sister) and *lHa 'dogs* (entrusting to the gods). The first part is a mythical account of the first marriage of man to a goddess. Here I shall give a summary of the account.

63. *Bag ma la dge ba'i las phran bdun gyi cho ga bkra shis dpal skyed*, dPal-spungs xylographic.edition, 10 folios.

"The goddess is called Srid-lcam 'Phrul-mo-che. She is a daughter of the god Zom-'brang (*alias* Sangs-po 'bum-khri) and his wife Gung-btsun-ma (*alias* Chu-lcam rgyal-mo). Her brother is called lHa-sras lJon-pa (*alias* Srid-rje 'Brang-dkar). The man is called Ling-dkar, the lord of rGya. As the goddess is very beautiful everybody, gods and man, wants to marry her. Ling-dkar asks the Lord of the gods if he can marry his daughter. The Lord of the gods says to him: 'My daughter Srid-lcam will go from the gods to the gods. She is not made for black-headed man. The rising and settng of the sun and moon takes place in the realm of the sky. Have you ever seen them fall down on to the plain? We are the gods of the heavens. You are a black-headed earth-worm!' Ling-dkar replies: 'I want to take a wife of good origin. I am of the race of man of the spacious earth, the head of the line from whom man will multiply. If man and gods come together, man will worship the gods and the gods will protect man, the one will be kind to the other. Although the sun and moon shine in the sky their rays come to the earth. The warm vapour exudes from the earth and goes up into the sky as clouds. This is an example of what we are to each other. I ask you to give me your daughter'. This and other speeches convince the Lord of the gods who gives his consent in the end. He demands as a bride-price various things such as gold, turquoise, garments and an arrow, and animals like, *'bri*, horses and sheep. These are to be brought to the land of the gods by the seven *gnye'u* (kinsmen of the groom) who ride on white horses. Before the goddess departs she and her brother play dice for their share in the inheritance from their parents. This is presided over by the priest, *lha bon* Thod-dkar. She wants to have half, but being a girl she ultimately gets only one third. The brother plays the dice in the following manner: 'I play the dice of the *pho lha* from the right. I play the dice of the *sgra bla* from the left. I play the dice of the *srog lha* in front. I play the dice of the *yul lha* behind. I play one dice of being heir to my father'. He wins a large share. Now the sister's turn comes. She scatters seven grains of blue barley to the sky and says: 'If I have a god, may he protect me today. O! *ma lha* Bu-rdzi, play the heavenly dice. The *sgra bla* who is awesome be witness'. She plays the dice which comes up single.

When she leaves, the father gives her an arrow as a parting gift whereas the mother gives her a spindle and the brother a turquoise. On departure she makes salutations to the gods, the priest, her parents and brother. Then attaching a roll of white silk to the right hand side of the lap of the bride the seven *gnye'u* lead her away to the land of man. At the same time, the priest *lha-bon*



Thod-dkar performs the ritual of *g.yang 'gugs* at the house of the Lord of gods."[64]

The brother invokes four gods: *pho lha*, *sgra bla*, *srog lha* leaving out *ma lha* and *zhang lha*, but adds *yul lha* who normally does not come into the group of the five gods of the head. This seems to suggest that *ma lha* and *zhang lha* are to be invoked by the sister, but instead of *zhang lha* she calls *sgra bla* and *ma lha*.[65] There is certainly a confusion as to which gods she should call. Generally each person has by nature the five gods of the head, but here the sister seems to have the right to invoke only two of the gods. I have only one edition of the text and therefore am in no position to make any textual comparisons.

The ritual of *g.yang 'gugs* (calling of the essence of fortune) is considered to be important, because if the bride or *mag pa* (male bride) leaves the house for good, *g.yang* of the family might also depart. This is thought to be unlucky for the family. On the other hand, a similar ritual is executed at the house of the groom. This is naturally thought to be auspicious, because the bride comes with her wealth and the prospect of continuing the posterity of the family. The term *g.yang* is translatable by the essence of fortune. The word applies to an abstract notion rather than to any tangible thing. It conveys the notion of that which is 'essence' of the wealth. It is used with many other words like *rta g.yang* (*g.yang* of the horse) and *'bri g.yang* (*g.yang* of the *'bri*) or *rgya gar chos g.yang* (*g.yang* of the religon from India), *stag gzig nor g.yang* (*g.yang* of the wealth of sTag-gzig). It is quite a common practice in Amdo that if someone wants to sell his horse he pulls some of the hair from the mane of the horse and attaches it to the door of the enclosure where his horses are kept. This is a symbolic gesture for retaining *g.yang* of the horse, even though it may be sold at a good price. If a good horse is lost or dies, it is described as *g.yang shor ba* (the escape of *g.yang*). Therefore, the ritual of *g.yang 'gugs* must take place. The word *g.yang* very often occurs with the term *phya* in which case *phya* has the connotation of life.

*g.Yang* is closely connected with sheep. It usually occurs as an epithet of sheep (*g.yang-mo lug*). Here the Chinese word for sheep (*yang*) seems to have become an epithet of the Tibetan *lug*. However, in the Bonpo legend of the sheep, sheep is the symbol of *g.yang* because of its usefulness for human life. The first sheep came into existence from a wish of Ye-smon rgyal-po who wanted to have something that would

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64. *gTo phran*, published by Khedup Gyatsho, Delhi, 1973, Text No. 17, f. 419-446 (Karmay, 1977: No.71, 17).

65. *sgra bla*. This orthography occurs quite persistently in Bonpo works. The other form *dgra lha* occurs more often in Buddhist texts. But Kong-sprul made things more curious by writing in his work (for reference see note 68) *dgra bla* (f. 4a, 6b, 8a).

supply the essential needs of man. This first sheep is called Lug lHa-ba bal-chen and at the same time, it is the god of sheep.

The second part of the marriage ritual, the *lHa 'dogs* is the actual marriage ritual. A thread made of wool called *dmu thag* (the dMu-cord) is attached to the sinciput of the groom, a blue thread *g.yang thag* (the *g.yang* cord) is attached to the sinciput of the bride. The groom holds an arrow and makes offerings of *chang* and *gtor ma* to the five gods of the head. The bride holds a spindle and makes offerings of curd and *phye mar* (mixture of *rtsam pa* and butter). The priest presents the groom with a piece of gold (in the form of a ring or ear ring). This is called *bla gser* (the soul-gold) and the bride with a turquoise *bla g.yu* (the soul-turquoise). The couple is seated on a white felt carpet on which a swastika of barley grains is laid. The priest then begins the ritual chanting together with the couple.

This part of the ritual contains a short account of the original genealogy of the world followed by a story about the original source of the arrow, the spindle and mateial of the *dmu thag* and *g.yang thag*. This ritual, which one might call the marriage ritual, serves also as the ritual of the *g.yang 'gugs*. The arrow is the symbol of man whereas the spindle is that of woman. These symbols never seem to have been noted by writers on Tibetan culture. The *dmu thag* is originally connected with the early Tibetan kings. It was in the form of light and when a king died his body dissolved gradually into light from the feet upwards. This light then joined with the *dmu thag* which dissolved into the heaven of dMu. The ancestral gods of the Tibetan kings is sometimes the dMu and sometimes the Phyva. The *dmu thag* is closely connected with this ancestral origin. In *PT* 126.2 a messenger of the Phyva goes to the heaven of the dMu asking for a dMu king to rule over black-headed man.

The story of the origin of the arrow, the spindle, the *dmu thag* and *g.yang thag* is as follows:

> "... Up there in the valley a father Phyva-gang g.yang-grags and a mother Srid-pa'i gdong-bzang-ma. From their union three heavenly eggs came into existence. From the bursting of the golden egg a golden arrow with turquoise tail feathers appeared. This is the arrow of life, 'fish-eye' (?*nya mig*) of the groom. From the bursting of the turquoise egg a turquoise arrow with golen tail feathers appeared.This is the glorious arrow of the bride. From the bursting of the conch white egg a gold spindle came into existence. From the light rays of the sky and the vapour of the ocean a white clump came into existence. This was drawn out and spun by the wind. It was wound around a tree. The name that as given to this yarn was *dmu tag* and *g.yang thag*..."



The ritual then ends with the following words:

> "... The *bla gser* of the groom and the *bla g.yu* of the bride,
> At first when these two were born, they were born separately,
> Secondly they matured separately,
> Thirdly they were united as one.
> Let us entrust them to the gods,
> Let us attach them to the gods.
> The groom's *dmu thag* and the bride's *g.yang thag*,
> At first when these two were born, they were born separately,
> Secondly they matured separately,
> Thirdly they were united as one.
> Let us entrust them to the gods,
> Let us attach them to the gods.
> The life arrow fish-eye of the groom,
> The golden spindle with a turquoise leaf of the bride,
> At first when these two were born, they were born separately,
> Secondly they matured separately,
> Thirdly they were united as one.
> Let us entrust them to the gods,
> Let us attach them to the gods....
> The life of the male depends on the arrow,
> The life of the female depends on the spindle,
> We entrust them to the gods.
> Let the arrow and the spindle not be separated.
> Let us entrust the *dmu thag* and (*g.yang thag*) to the gods,
> Let them not be cut.
> We two the man and woman,
> Have become like the lake and the goddess of the lake.
> Let man and gods not be separated.
> Like the sun and moon residing in the sky,
> Let man and gods not be separated.
> Like the snow lion living majestically in the snow mountains,
> Let man and gods not be separated.
> Like the tiger living in the forest,
> Let man and gods not be separated....
> May the gold pillar of life of the man not fall down.
> May the turquoise beam of life of the woman not be broken...."[66]

Apart from being a weapon the arrow plays an important role as the symbol of man in legends as well as in actual cultural life. In the marriage ritual there are three kinds of arrows. 1. *lha mda' sgro dkar*, the

66. *gTo phran* (see n. 64), Text No. 17, f. 447-454.

divine arrow with white tail feathers which is the *rten* (support) of the five gods of the head. This is part of the bride-price brought by the seven *gnye'u*. 2. *tshe mda' nya mig*, the life arrow, is the groom's arrow, the symbol of man. 3. *dpal mda'*, the glorious arrow, is given as a parting gift to the goddess by her father. The function of the third arrow for the bride is not clear in the ritual, but in some regions in Tibet an arrow is attached to the collar of the bride when she sets out from her home to the bride-groom's house. Therefore the use of this arrow varies as much as the marriage customs themselves. At any rate, in Amdo or at least at Bonpo homes every male member of a family possessed a ritual arrow which is about two feet long and carefully decorated with five pieces of silk of different colours, a silver mirror and a turquoise. They are kept in the chapel in a special box. An arrow is brought by the maternal uncle when a son is born. This practice is quite in accordance with the marriage ritual text where it is mentioned that when the wife gives birth to a son an arrow must be planted on the pillow and if a girl is born it should be a spindle. However, the custom of placing the spindle seems to have disappeared or at least in Amdo.

Another custom was that every year each man had to plant a ritual arrow (*mda' rgod*) in the cairn (*la btsas*) situated on the shoulder of a mountain near by. This planting of arrows is accompanied by a great feast and the performing of the *bsang* ritual for the *yul lha* to whom the arrow is entrusted.The arrows people plant into the *la btsas* can be from ten to fifteen feet long. In the place of tail feathes three wooden painted slats in the shape of feathers are attached to the tail of the shaft. On this arrow the silk of five diffrent colours is not attached, but instead one finds a *rlung rta*,[67] the symbol of fortune. It is a piece of cloth printed with words from the *g.yang 'gugs* rituals.The colour of one's own *rlung rta* is in accordance with the element in one's horoscope so that the *rlung rta* of each person is one of five colours.

The most detailed and vividly poetical description of the arrow rendered in oratorical style is contained in a short work by Kong-sprul[68] The arrow is therefore particularly important for opening up the marriage relationship. The expression in Tibetan for this is *gnyen lam mda' yis phye ba*, the way of the marriage relationship is to be opened by the arrow. Another related expression is *gnyen lam dar gyis sbrel ba*, the way of the marriage relationship is to be connected by silk. This is in accordance with the legend where the goddess is led away by attaching a roll of silk to her lap. A legend has it that the minister mGar sTong-btsan yul-zung took an arrow when he went to China to ask for the Chinese

67. The normal spellign is *klungs*.

68. *mDo khams sde dge'i rgyal khab tu bod blon mdo mkhar ba'i btsun mo byon skabs mda' dar 'dzugs pa'i 'bel gtam*, dPal-spungs xylographic edition, 6 folios.



princess for the wife of Srong-btsan sgam-po. The emperor presented him with three hundred girls of the same age and told him to select his daughter from amongst them. Whereupon the minister offered the arrow to the princess. However, an arrow is also demanded by the dMu when the messengers of the Phyva asked them for a king in *PT* 126,2. Therefore, the opening up of relationships through an arrow may not necessarily be confined to marriage.

Kong-sprul's work on the marriage ritual is dvided into seven main parts and a prayer making eight in all:

1. *sna 'dre bskrad pa,* the exorcising of spirits who come ahead of the bride.
2. *mnol grib bkru ba*, the purification of the bride's polluton which might pollute the god of the hearth.
3. *gdan bting ba*, the spreading of the carpet for the bride.
4. *dkar gsum gyis ngo gso ba*, the offering of the three white foods to the bride.
5. *ming 'dogs pa*, giving a new name to the bride.
6. *lha la 'dogs pa*, invoking the gods for protection.
7. *g·yang 'gugs pa*, the summoning of the *g.yang*.
8. *mtha' rten bkra shis brjod pa*, the prayers.

Parts 1, 2, 5 and 8 are not in the *Ming sring dpal bgos dang lha 'dogs*. On the other hand, Kong-sprul does not give any part of the myth contained in the first section of the Bonpo ritual. No doubt he had consulted many old Bonpo marriage rituals as he states (f.1a): *yig rnying phal cher grong sngags mi mkhas pas bcos pas tshul dang mthun pa mi snang bas*, since most of the old manuscripts (of the ritual) are altered by the village tantrists who are not too learned, there is no (marriage ritual, *bag ma len pa'i cho ga*) which is comprehensive. His work is well organised and scholarly but has therefore ineviatably become over-laid with religious worship, and in process has lost the archaic and secular charm which is present in the *Ming sring dpal bgos dang lha 'dogs*.

## 9. rDzogs chen

rDzogs chen (the Great Perfection) is an important part of Tibetan Buddhism. A parallel teaching is also found in the Bonpo tradition. This philosophical teaching is classified a the highest way or *bla med kyi theg pa* among the nine *theg pa* of the Bonpo. In the system of the rNying-ma-pa it is kown as Atiyoga or *rtsol sgrub dang bral ba'i theg pa*, the way of spontaneity.

According to the rNying-ma-pa tradition it was the great Tibetan monk Vairocana who brought this teaching to Tibet from India in the eighth century A.D. The biography of this monk, *VD*, sheds some light

on the problem of his meeting the masters in India and his introduction of the teaching into Tibet although the biography itself dates back only to the fourteenth century. One of the most eminent masters he met in India was Śrīsimha of whom we kown nothing except that according to Klong-chen rab-'byams (1308-63) he was born in China and travelled to India where he settled. Nevertheless, the rDzogs chen Vairocana brought is an essentially esoteric teaching and he introduced it into Tibet at a time when the minds of Tibetans were wavering between the two systems of Buddhism as represented by Śāntarakṣita from India and by Hva-shang Mahāyāna from China.

The Buddhism Mahāyāna was professing had an essentially exoterical character leaning mainly on sūtras such as *Prajñāpāramitā* and *Lankāvatāra* whereas the teaching brought by Vairocana was in the mainstream of the tantric tradition involving the transmission of the *abhiṣeka* empwerment, but before it became established Vairocana was himself expelled from Central Tibet and not long after this the persecution of Buddhist establishments took place.

When Buddhism began to reappear at the beginning of the eleventh century A.D. the word rDzogs chen already covered not only the teachings of Vairocana and Vimalamitra, but also many others which gave rise to the criticisms made by the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od and the prince-monk Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od. From this time rDzogs chen remained an ever-controversial subject. On the one hand, it is considered to be a teaching exceeding all other means and therefore the best and most effective in bringing about the realization of Budhahood in this present life. On the other hand, for the orthodox Buddhists it is nothing but the remnants of doctrines once brought to Tibet by Hva-shang Mahāyāna, which were proved to be false and banned.

'Gos *lo tsā ba* Khug-pa lhas-btsas began to refute rDzogs chen by raising the question of its authentic origin. He asserted that such a teaching did not exist in India. A little later, in his famous *DR* [69] Sa-paṇ Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan (1182-1251) brought in the question of the exitence of a Chinese system of rDzogs chen (*rgya nag lugs kyi rdzogs chen la/*). Although he made no direct reference to the rDzogs chen of the rNying-ma-pa he nevertheless caused an even more severe kind of criticim of rDzogs chen to spark off. This came from 'Bri-gung dPal-'dzin (fourteenth century). For whom even the word *rdzogs chen* did not exist in any work of Indian origin and hence was completely inauthentic.

Most of the rNying-ma-pa polemic writers refute their critics by pointing out that rDzogs chen was brought to Tibet by Vairocana and Vimalamitra. However, Klong-chen rab-'byams admits that the teaching

69. pp. 309-20.



of Hva-shang Mahāyāna was a high form of rDzogs chen, but people who were contemporary with him did not understand it.[70] This is an allusion to Kamalaśīla. It would therefore be too involved to follow up all the arguments here. At any rate, because of the discovery of the Dunhuang manuscripts we are in better position than scholars like Mi-pham rgya-mtsho (1846-1912) to make comparisons between the texts of rDzogs chen and the early texts on the subject of *dhyāna* (*bsam gtan*) though he might have had access to some early works such as *bSam gtan mig sgron*[71] by gNubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes (tenth century A.D.). The orthodox Buddhists attack the adepts of rDzogs chen by saying that the doctrine contains the germ of Hva-shang Mahāyāna who taught the meditation of *ci yang yid la mi byed pa* which may be translated as 'not to think of anything'. This particular meditation may have derived from an extreme form of *avikalpajñāna (rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes)* which is a fundamental tenet of the *dhyāna* teaching. Through the meditation of *avikalpa* the adepts of the *dhyāna* tradition hold that they ultimately reach to the level of the Tathāgata-dhyāna (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i bsam gtan*).[72] For the orthodox Buddhists the practice of *ci yang yid la mi byed pa* is nothing but an obstacle to attaining Pratyaveksanājñāna (*so sor rtogs pa'i ye shes*). This sort of philosophical argument persisted throughout the centuries in Tibet. In this connection, Mi-pham rgya-mtsho laments about having no access to what Hva-shang Mahāyāna really wrote. He states in one of his polemical writings: "Apart from the oral information in which it is said that in ancient times the Chinese *bhikṣu* used eighty sūtras as the source to support his view of the meditation of 'not to think of anything', no texts exist nowadays revealing what passages of sūtra were quoted and how they were explained".[73]

However, even though in rDzogs chen there may be parallel ideas and practices to those of the Ch'an, rDzogs chen must be considered as of Indo-Tibetan origin whilst the Ch'an traditon in Tibet may be studied as an independent tradition. This is clealry shown in the *bSam gtan mig sgron*.

In the Bonpo tradition the word rDzogs chen covers quite loosely three different systems of meditation. They are kown as *a rdzogs snyan*

70. *gNas lugs mdzod*, ed. Gangtok. f. 32b.
71. sManrtsis shesrig spendzod series, Vol. 74, (Leh, 1974).
72. *Lankāvatāra-mahāyānasūtra* (*K* Vol. 29, No. 775, f. 179b). Dunhuang manuscript in IOL, Stein, Ch. 2a, A (709), f. 43a, b; Suzuki, 1927: 81 *et seq.*
73. *gZhan gyis brtsad pa'i lan mdor bsdus pa rigs lam rab gsal de nyid snang byed: ... sngon gyi rgya nag dge slong gis ci yang yid la mi byed pa'i rgyab brten du mdo sde brgyad cu khungs su byas zhes grags pa'i gtam rgyun tsam las/ mdo sde'i lung gang drangs ba dang/ de'i don ji ltar gtan la phab pa'i yig cha gang yang deng sang mi snang bas/* (Ngagyur nyingmay sungrab series, Vol. 5, Gangtok, 1969). *Cf.* also Imaeda, 1975: 136-41 and Article No.5 in this volume.

*gsum*, i.e. *A khrid*, *rDzogs chen* and *Zhang zhung snyan brgyud*. *A khrid* was promulgated by the great hermit, dGongs-mdzod (1030-1096). His system is divided into eighty periods called *A khrid thun mtshams brgyad cu pa*. Each period lasting one or two weeks. After completing this course the adept is qualified and given the title *rtogs ldan*. However, the system of eighty periods was reduced to thirty by 'A-zha Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1198-1263) and a little later this was further reduced to fifteen by Bru rGyal-ba g.yung-drung (91242-1296). Since then the system has been known as *Bru'i a khrid thun mtshams bco lnga pa*, the Fifteen period-A-khrid of Bru. This system of *A khrid* meditation has been thoroughly studied by Dr. P. Kvaerne (1973).

The 2nd, the system of rDzogs chen, was introduced by bZhod-ston dNgos-grub grags-pa when he rediscovered a group of texts called *rDzogs chen yang rtse klong chen*[74] in 1088 A.D. according to the Bonpo chronology. This system of the Bonpo corresponds to the Buddhist tradition of the *Sems sde*. It has therefore connection with the rDzogs chen of the rNying-ma-pa.

*Zhang zhung snyan brgyud*, the 3rd, is considered to be the most important of all the sytems of meditation among the Bonpo. It is reputed to go back to the Zhang-zhung master Gyer-spungs sNang-bzher lod-po in the eighth century A.D. A biographical outline of each adept in a long line from this master up to the author sPa bsTan-rgyal bzang-po himself (fifteenth century) is given in his *Zhang zhung snyan brgyud kyi brgyud pa'i bla ma'i rnam thar*.[75]

One of the distinctive theories that *Zhang zhung snyan brgyud* formulates is the five lights of five different colours and the *kun gzhi*, the primodial intelligence as the begetter of the state of Ignorance and that of Enlightenment.

74. Kvaerne, 1974: T. 255; Karmay, 1977: No.55.
75. *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* (see n.21), section Ka.



# Early Evidence for the Existence of Bon as a Religion in the Royal Period

In the past few years the Bon religion has been studied by several eminent Tibetologists who all agree that Bon considerably influenced Tibetan religious beliefs - especially Bon literature, such as the hagiographical cycles of the master gShen-rab Mi-bo and certain *gter ma*, some of which, are well known quasi-historical documents.

Both Buddhist and Bonpo historical traditions agree that when Buddhism was introduced to Tibet in the seventh century it encountered an indigenous set of beliefs referred to as Bon. Western scholars, however, disagree on the value of these traditions and some even go so far as to question the very existence of the religion designated as Bon and its interpretation as a popular belief during the imperial period (seventh to ninth centuries). In my opinion, the Tibetan historical tradition is not altogether unfounded, but I do not wish to enter into its defence here. Tibetologists dealing with this question either believe that:

- Bon was the ancient religion of Tibet, thereby accepting the Tibetan historical tradition;[1] or,
- Those rituals which appear only in Bonpo literature are indeed very ancient but that during the royal period the term Bon referred to priests and came to designate a religion later;[2] or,
- The Bon religion did not come into existence as such before the eleventh century, maintaining that the ancient religion of Tibet was called gTsug or gTsug lag.[3] This theory is totally unknown to the Tibetan historical tradition.

The skeptical attitude towards the existence of a religion called Bon during the seventh to ninth centuries is perhaps due to the lack of clear and peremptory references to Bon as an organised religion with its own philosophical system in the stone inscriptions, in certain Dunhuang manuscripts and in non-Tibetan sources relevant to that period. As we have just seen, Western scholarly opinion on the subject is far from

1. Lalou, 1957: 5-14; Hoffmann, 1961: 14-27; Bacot, 1962: 3, 5-6; Haarh, 1969: 18, 109; Stein, 1981: 200; Tucci, Heissig, 1973: 271 *et seq.*
2. Snellgrove, Richardson, 1968: 59.
3. Ariane Macdonald, 1971: 219, 357, 376. See also its review by J. May in *Etudes Asiatique* 28, Berne 1974, 71-73.

uniform. Yet their arguments are usually based on such long and thorough research that it is almost impossible not to fall under the charm of their erudition and to accept their conclusions. At the outset I therefore basically accepted the opinion that the existence of a religion called Bon during the royal period was not historically attested. I was mistaken, however, in naively thinking that those who had treated the subject had examined in detail all the Dunhuang documents available. I was therefore very surprised when I came across a Dunhuang manuscript which was obviously not taken into account by the scholars mentioned above.

The document in question is *PT* 972, preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. It consists of three folios (1a-3b) and is written in verse (116 lines in total). The text bears no title but ends with the following sentence: "(The saying) of the tree pronounced by the Buddha" (*zhal nas gsungs pa'i ljon shing*).[4] Contrary to its description as a 'fragment',[5] the manuscript is complete. Written in *dbu can* characters, there are five lines per folio except for the last which has only four. There is no colophon indicating the author, who therefore remains unknown. Initially the manuscript was folded in half lengthwise, marking each folio and slightly damaging the manuscript. Between lines 1 and 2 on folio 1a the damage is such that a small part is torn, causing a word to be missing on the front page and two on the back page, between lines 4 and 5; the last two however were rewritten next to the tear.

As regards the text's antiquity, all Dunhuang manuscripts were sealed in about 1035, but the latest dates ascertained from the Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts are *circa* 924 or 984.[6] This does not really add much to our knowledge of the document's date. Its language and style, however, suggest that it was written at a time when Buddhism was already well established. It is quite possible that the original text is older than the manuscript. Indeed, we know that after the Chinese reconquest of Dunhuang from the Tibetans in 848, Buddhist texts continued to be copied in Tibetan. We do not know, however, whether the new texts continued to be written in Tibetan. To my knowledge, the text is not mentioned in any other Tibetan source.

The work deals with Buddhist theories such as the impermanence of all phenomena and the laws of *karma*. The main purpose of the text is to incite non-Buddhists to take up Buddhism. The transitory nature of human existence and the importance of the hereafter as opposed to wordly existence are strongly stressed. The author uses alarming terms and poetic images intended to engender profound sadness and to encourage the reader to practise Buddhism. He attempts to frighten the reader by declaring with firm conviction that life inevitably comes to an end and that at the time of death neither parents nor friends will be of any use; only the 'religion of the gods' (*lha chos*, i. e. Buddhism),[7] the Buddha and the *saṃgha* can protect those who dwell in *saṃsāra*. The author remarks that ordinary men have faith in Bon, described as *mu stegs*, the 'non-Buddhist religion',[8] and the reader is warned against following such a faith. He likens the adherent of Bon to an insect caught in a spider's web: the more he struggles, the more the web tightens around him. He goes on to advise the reader not to trust the *mo bon*. In my opinion, the term in this context refers to the Bon priest, presented here as an enemy of the *saṃgha* (I shall return to this point later). He then warns the reader against worshipping certain categories of beings, such as the *'dre*; the *srin*, the *bdud*, and the *bgegs*. The fact that these beings are cited just after the *mo bon* suggest that the latter propitiated them.[9] Finally, the author again strongly encourages the reader immediately to adopt Buddhism, for human life is transitory and one should not waste time with false practices.

The way in which Bon is presented here implies that it was mainly concerned with earthly welfare. From the Buddhist point of view, such an attitude is unacceptable since it is incompatible with its doctrines of impermanence, rebirth and *karma*.

4. In *PT* 842 the same expression *zhal nas gsungs pa* precedes a title of a *sūtra*. The author of our text was perhaps inspired by such an example to provide the title for his work. In later Buddhist works, the 'word' (*bka'*) of the Buddha is classified into three categories. The first one of these is: *zhal nas gsungs pa'i bka'*, see mKhas-grub dGe-legs dpal-bzang (1385-1438), *rGyud sde spyi rnam*, Lhasa edition, f.13a.
5. Lalou, 1950: "Fragment qui finit...rdzogs so// 3f. (8+34) non pag.; traces de très fines, reg. jaunes, pas de marges".
6. De la Vallée Poussin, 1962, C 107, C 108. *PT* 849 (Hackin, 1924) gives *btsan po ācārya* among a list of Tibetan kings, a title often occurs with the name of lHa Bla-ma Ye-shes-'od, who lived around the end of the tenth century, *cf.* Article No.1. *PT* 849 could therefore belong to the same period.
7. In *PT* 1284 (Macdonald, Imaeda, 1978, Pl..550,II), the expression *lha chos* is used with a different meaning. It is distinct from the *bka'*, 'word' of the Buddha: *lha'i chos dang bka' na re*, "the *chos* of the gods and the word of the Buddha say". A little further on, it occurs again, but in a different form: *lha la yid ches chos byan (bya) na/*, "if one must believe in the gods and practise the religion". The manuscript does not specify which gods and what religion it meant, but it is certainly not Buddhism. In my opinion, the expression referred to Bon before the Buddhists used it to designate Buddhism. *Cf.* Tucci,1949: 720; Stein, 1981:144, 168, 204, n.204.
8. The expressions *mu stegs* and *mu stegs can* are of translation of the Sanskrit term *tīrthika* (Sakaki, 1916-26: 3320) and at first designated all the non-Buddhist philosophical and religious schools in India, but as in out text they came to be used generally to refer to all non-Buddhist beliefs and their adherents. The expressions are usually translated by 'heresy', but this does not give their real sense. For a clear definition, see *GBB* (*T* Vol.144, No. 5833, p.84-3-2).
9. The last three spirits are categories which make up the eight group of spirits known as *lha srin sde brgyad*. The Bonpo propitiate them even today, see *KS*, No. 7, pp. 236-53 (Karmay, 1977, No.30).

The use of imagery seems to play an important role both on the literary and ideological level. Bon is compared to poison, while Buddhism is compared to nectar.

This Dunhuang document from the royal period therefore attests to the existence at that time of a set of beliefs designated as Bon and described as *mu stegs*, 'non-Buddhist' and contrary to Buddhism. It is important to note that another text in the same vein, *PT* 1284, also attacks the ancient system of beliefs. Moreover, the document presented here is not the only one to mention the existence of Bon as a religion: there is also *PT* 239/II, a Buddhist document devoted to funerary rites which has been published and is well known to Tibetologists.[10] The following passage from it, written in the same fighting spirit, depicts the two religions with striking contrast:

Bon:

*myi nag po'i gzhung/*
*sid nag po'i lugs/*
*bon yas 'dod smrang/*
"The tradition of 'black men',
The customs of black funerary rites,
The Bon (religion) is the archetypal myth of rituals which require ritual objects of offering."[11]

Buddhism:

*lha chos dkar po'i gzhung/*
*myi dkar po'i lugs/*
*shid dkar po'i ches (chos)/*
"The tradition of the white gods' religion,
The customs of 'white men',
The religion of white funerary rites."[12]

The expression *mo bon* in our text refers to him who practises Bon, i.e. a 'priest'. Moreover, the *mo bon* are presented as opponents of the *saṃgha*. In later texts, however, the term is often used to designate 'diviner'. On the other hand, in early texts, the expression is reversed: *bon mo*, meaning a kind of 'priestess' (*bon po dang bon mo*).[13]

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10. Stein, 1970; Ariane Macdonald, 1971: 373-76.
11. The word *yas* in later Bonpo texts is often combined with *stags* and has the sense of ritual items for offering, such as the *rgyang*, *shing ris*, and *nam mkha'*. For illustrations of these ritual objects, see Snellgrove, 1967: 308, 294, 301, 310. One also finds the form *'dod yas*, see *KS*, text No. 7, p.136.
12. Macdonald, Imaeda, 1978, Pl.173, ll.27-28.
13. *PT* 990 (Macdonald, Imaeda, 1978, Pl.279, l.15); *dGe sdig rnam par dbye ba'i mdo* (*K* Vol. 40, No.1022, p.344-3-4); *'Phags pa legs snyes kyi rgyu dang 'bras bu bstan pa* (*K* Vol.4O, No.1023, p.340-3-3). These two texts are identical, but the second in



Our manuscript, as well as *PT* 239/II and others,[14] points to the existence of a firmly established religion embodying a popular system of beliefs known as Bon during the royal period.

It is true, however, that this ancient system of beliefs still remains undefined and we know almost nothing of its philosophy or dogma. For this reason, when we refer to 'organised Bon' from the eleventh century onwards, we are in fact referring to what Tibetan Buddhists call 'transformed Bon' (*bsgyur bon*) which the Bonpo of the later tradition call 'Eternal Bon' (*g.yung drung bon*), and they use this last expression to designate retrospectively the Bon of the royal period as well. As this question is very complex, I will only mention here that what one calls 'organised Bon' from the eleventh century cannot be entirely dissociated from the Bon religion that existed during the royal period, for it is impossible to overlook the many connections that are attested between the Bon tradition of the two periods.[15]

Translation of the Tibetan Text

(1a) Just as hail, drought and storms
instantly destroy
the branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit
of strong trees in the summer,
Life is so transitory: we must leave it soon.
There is no way to avoid this, for life is illusory by nature.
Even though the great army of the Lord of Death is on their heels
Men, both old and young, blindly hope they will continue to live.
Since, from time immemorial, they have lacked energy,
wandering in the insufferable ravines of *saṃsāra*,
they are slain everywhere by suffering and illness,
and when they must return to these waves,
again they do not realise: they are foolish by nature.

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the colophon specifies its translator: 'Gos Chos-grub. On this translator, see Demiéville, 1970: 47.

14. For example, *PT* 1040 (Spanien, Imaeda, 1979, Pl.314) states: *bon 'di gsang ba'i bon...*, "This Bon is the secret Bon...". The manuscript is unfortunately incomplete; *PT* 1248 (Spanien, Imaeda, 1979, Pl.506) reads: *pa'i bu tsa bon rabs/ phyag sbal na mchis pa la dpe'a blangs pa'o/* "the account of Bon, entitled the Son of the Father. This was copied from the manuscript kept in the official library". *rGya bod tshig mdzod chen mo*, (Chengdu, 1985) defines the term *phyag sbal* as *btson* or *btson dong*, 'prison'. However, one of the royal edicts states: *dpe 'di 'dra ba bcu gsum bris te/ gcig ni phyag sbal na bzhag go/...*"Like this copy, thriteen are made. One of them was placed in the *phyag sbal*" (*KhG*, p.372). The definition of the dictionary just quoted is therefore impossible. In this case we have to say the royal edict was kept in a prison! *PT* 443 also describes Bon as a religion (Lalou, 1945-1947, 220-21).
15. *Cf.* Ariane Macdonald, 1971: 210.

Since even when they are beaten with a staff, they still do not think of making an effort.
They are no different from the offspring of beasts of burden.
If one lies down to sleep without reflecting,
the merit gained in this world (folio 1b) will disappear through the door,
and the merit accumulated in past lives will be almost exhausted.
If one does not remember oneself,
who then will remember?
Virtuous actions are, for the most part,
like seeds sown in a fertile field:
even though they are invisible in the spring, their fruit will be reaped in autumn.
Negative actions, for the most part,
do not immediately pierce the body like a knife,
but follow one wherever one goes.
Now that you have the opportunity to practise Dharma,
may your actions be the nectar of the supreme goal.
Take care you act with rigour and virtue.
Since to be born in the superior realms of gods and men
or in inferior worlds of the *preta,* animals or hell,
depends on oneself,
why harm oneself?
What is nectar and what is poison,
if one looks closely, does not one clearly see?
If the fool (2a) believes it is easy,
he will be caught by the noose of the *bdud*,
and taken away to the three lower realms of rebirth.
To repent afterwards is useless.
Even if one has much power and many relatives,
At the time of death, one is no longer great or small;
At that moment one is no longer brave or cowardly.
A dying man in his bed
may be surrounded by many relatives and friends,
the intolerable torments of death
he alone suffers.
Of what use are friends and relatives then?
If the wise man does not practise the holy religion,
he is but a canny monkey, without sense.
If the scholar does not observe discipline,
he is but an empty-handed gold seeker.
If the rich man does not give alms,
he is but the guardian of someone else's treasure.
Do not strive to accumulate wealth



for, if you do so,
what you accumulate becomes the wealth of another.
Even though bees work hard (2b) to gather nectar,
often their honey is appreciated by others.
Wherever one is born, one knows one must sustain oneself.
One does not refuse to act in order to eat.
Without effort from the seeds alone,
one cannot obtain sesame oil.
For instance, how can from the seeds of buckwheat and pea
grow fruit to become barley?
If one acts well, one's glory will be great.
If one acts badly, evil will result.
Ordinary people,
have faith in Bon, the 'non-Buddhist doctrine'.
For activity they (i.e. ordinary people who follow Bon) indulge in materials.
They are like erring insects,
who follow each other into the spider's web.[16]
The more they wave about their six arms, the more they become entangled.
Do not put your trust in the *mo bon*.
Do not worship the *'dre* or the *srin*.
Do not seek protection from the *bdud* or the *bgegs*.
Only the 'religion of the gods' can protect one from suffering.
Only the Buddha is powerful enough to protect us from birth and death.[17]
Only the noble *saṃgha* can be a useful guide.(3a)
Listen! Oh sons of good family!
Since you are offered the remedy of the purest nectar,
do not drink the poison of perverse views.
One who is born as a human being
is preceded by his good and bad actions.
Whatever wealth, great or little, one has accumulated stays behind.
Even though children believe they will always remain young,
How can they remain young?
Just like the prisoner who is led to the execution field,
each step we take brings us closer to death.
Who knows, we may even die tomorrow.
One must not remain passive.
One must pay homage and act this very moment.
Who knows if we will not die tomorrow or the day after.

16. The usual term for web is *bal thag* or *sdom thag*.
17. On the expression *skye shi*, see Imaeda, 1981: 5-6.

When one is caught by the noose of the *bdud*,
(then relatives or friends) may appeal a thousand or ten thousand times over, one no longer hears.[18]
Why shoud the *bdud* be kind?
The *bgegs* set obstacles everywhere.
The *gdon* play tricks on everyone.
Wealth and food accumulated in a lifetime,
sons, wives, servants and property
must be abandoned, (3b) and one must leave,
if the 'religon (of the gods)', which one understands, has an intended object.
Whatever wealth you have accumulated in your time,
will vanish at death's dawn.
No matter how much food has been stored to live
on the morning of death one departs famished.
Whatever clothes you have prepared to use,
you leave naked on the morning of your death.
Even though you may have many friends and relatives,
not one will appear on the morning of your death.
Your house will be taken from you before your very eyes.
Whether you be intelligent, brave or wise,
do not renounce the ten virtuous actions, no matter how difficult.
They are the seeds which allow one to be reborn as a god or a man.
The ten non-virtuous actions are indeed easy to commit,
but the three lower types of rebirth are intolerable.
For this reason carefully practise the ten virtuous actions.
(The saying) of the tree, pronounced (by the Buddha).

**The Tibetan text**

(1a) ci ltar dbyar gi (gyi) ljon shing bzang po la/
yal ka lo 'bras me tog 'bras...kyang/
grang lhags than drags dus kyi rlung byung bas/
de dag skad cig tsam gis (gyis) myed pa ltar/
tshe 'di myi rtag myur du 'gro dgos na'/
cis kyang myi zlog sgyu ma'i rang bzhin can/
'chi bdag sde chen rding (rting) la thug bzhin du/
sems can byis pa rgan dgon (rgon) da dung ma tshor dung ('dug) du re/
thog ma myed pa'i 'bad thag bcad pa na/
'khor ba'i gcong rong myi bzad kha 'drim ('grim) bzhin/
de kun dag na sdug bsngal nad rnams kyang/

18. The same verse occurs in *PT* 1284 (Spanien, Imaeda, 1979, Pl.553, l.33).

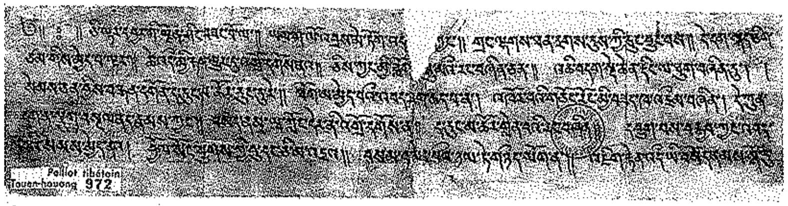


bsad nas lva (rba) der ni 'gro dgos na/
da dung ma tshor glen ba (pa'i) rang bzhin...(can)/
dbyug pas brgyab kyang 'bad pa'i sems myed na'/
byol song pyugs (phyugs) bu dang ci ma 'dra/
bsam pa med pa'i nyal te gnyid log na/
'jig rten 'di yi bsod nams sgo ru (1b) nub/
sngun gi (gyi) bsod nams ci bsags zad du nye/
bdag la bdag gis bzhen (gzhen) bskul ma btab na/
dge ba'i las rnams phal cher spyad pa ni/
zhing rab zhing la sa bon btab pa bzhin/
dbyid la snang ba myed kyang lo 'bras ston na rtsa (btsa')/
sdig pa'i las rnams phal cher spyad pa ni/
'phral du lus la mtshon ltar myi gcod kyang/
gang ltar 'gro ba'i sa phyogs de na sdod/
da ltar chos spyod khom ba (pa'i) tshe/
don mchog bdud rtsi las su byos/
dge spyod myel tshe dam du gyis/
mtho ris skyes pa'i lha dang myi/
yi dags (dvags) byol song dmyal ba gsum/
gang...bdag la dbang yod na/
ci phyird bdag la gnod pa byed/
dug dang bdud rtsi gang yin pa/
bltas na gsal bar myi mngon nam/
blun po sems (2a) la sla snyam na/
bdud kyi zhags pas zin nas su/
ngan song gsum du khrid 'og du (tu)/
de nas 'gyod pas phan pa myed/
ci ltar dbang che gnyen mang yang/
shi ba'i dus na che chung myed/
de yi dus na dpa' sdar myed/
bdag nyid mal na nyal bzhin du/
gnyen bshes mang pos mtha' bskor yang/
srog gcod myi bzod sdug bsngal dag/
bdag nyid gcig pus myong bar 'gyur/
de bas gnyen dang bshes ci phan/
'dzangs pa dam chos myi spyod na/
de ni spre'u gcam don myed yin/
mkhas pa tshul khrigs (khrims) mi srung na/
de ni gser pa lag stong yin/
phyug la sbyin pa myi gtong na/
de ni gzhan gi (gyi) gter srungs yin/
ha chang (cang) bsogs la ma zhen cig/
ha chang (cang) bsogs la zhen pa ni/

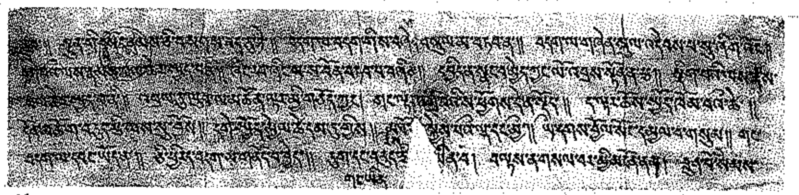
bsags pa gzhan gi (gyi) nor du 'gyur/
sbrang mas 'bad de (2b) rtsi bsags kyang/
sbrang rtsi gzhan dag spyod par snang/
gar skyes su ni za shes na/
rang gi rtsol ba dor myi bya/
'bad pa myed par tig dag la/
til mar thob par 'gyur ma yin/
dper na bra sran sa bon (la) las/
'bras bu nas su ga la skye/
legs par spyad na dpal du 'gyur/
nyes par spyad na byur du 'ong/
so so byis pa skye bo rnams/
mu stegs bon la yid ches ste/
las kyi don du mtshan ma spyod/
dper na sbur bu 'gro byed pa'/
bal rdud (sdud) nang du shul drangs nas/
sug drug bskyod cing phyir phyir dam/
mo bon dag la srid ma ltos/
'dre srin dag la yar ma mchod/
bdud dang bgag (bgegs) la skyabs ma tshol/
sdug bsngal skyabs su lha chos bzang/
skye shi mgon du sangs rgyas che/
'phags pa'i dge 'dun phan ston yin/(3a)
kye rigs kyi bu rnams dgongs su gsol/
yang dag bdud rtsi sman blun (blud) na/
log par lta ba'i dug ma 'thung/
myi cig skyes pa'i tshe lus la/
bzang byas ngan byas mdun du thal/
che bsags chung bsags phyi na lus/
bus pa gzhon nu rtag snyam na'/
bus pa gzhon nu ga la rtag/
gsad sar khrid pa'i brtson (btson) bzhin du/
gom re bor zhing shi dang nye/
sang tsam 'chi yang su (sus) shes kyis/
bder bar 'dug par myi rigs ste/
di ring kho na bdud ('dud) de bya/
sang shi gnang shi sus shes kyis/
khri 'bod stong 'bod rnas myi thos/
bdud kyi zhags pas zin pa ni/
bdud ni ci la bsam pa chung/
bgrags (bgegs) ni ci yi bar du 'jug/
gdon ni ci la rkyal ka byed/
tshe cig bsags pa'i nor zas dang/

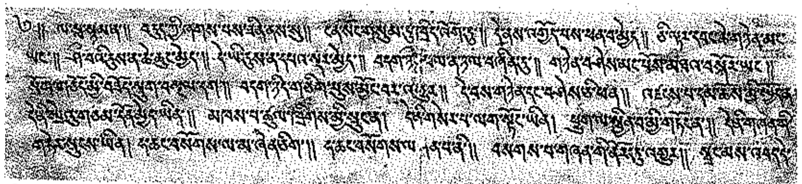


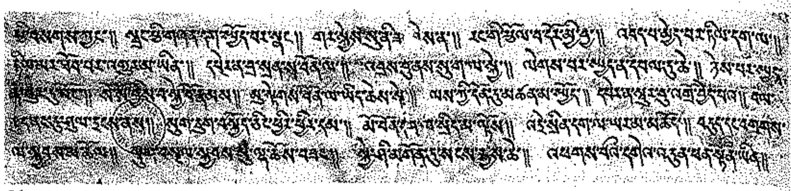
bu dang chung ma 'khor yul (yug) rnams/
bor te bdag (3b) ni 'gro dgos na'/
rtogs pa'i chos la srid yod na'/
ci tsam 'tsho ba'i nor bsags kyang/
'chi ba'i nang par gcig myi snang/
ci tsam 'tsho ba'i zas bsags kyang/
'chi ba'i nang par ltogs par 'gro/
ci tsam 'tsho ba'i gos bsags kyang/
'chi ba'i nang par gcer bur 'gro/
gnyen bshes mang pos mtha' bskor yang/
shi ba'i nang par gcig mi snang/
ldan pa'i khab khang sngun na khyer/
blo ldan dpa' 'dzangs gang yang rung/
dge bcu rka (dka') yang ma gtang zhig/
lha dang myir skye sa bon yin/
myi dge bcu po sla mod kyi/
ngan song gsum po bzod glags myed/
de bas brtson te dge bcu spyod/
zhal nas gsungs pa'i ljong shing// rdzogs sho//



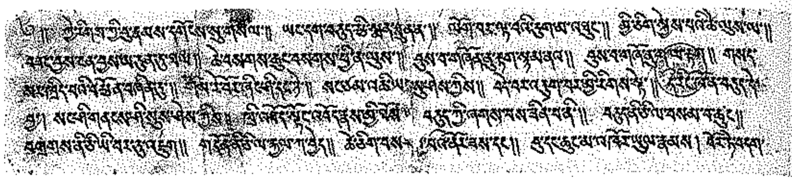
1a


1b

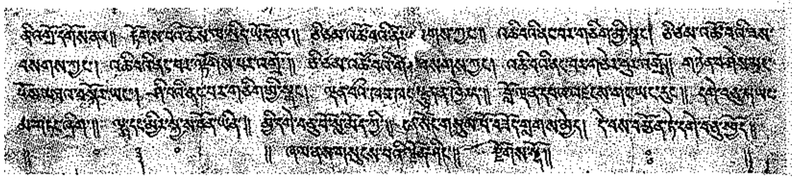

2a



2b



3a



3b

*Plate 14: PT 972. Photo. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris*

**Addendum**

Several years after the publication of the present article, Prof. Stein (1988) has taken up the subject of Bon again in a most illuminating article in order to reply in part to the criticism made by Prof. Snellgrove (1987: 403, n.47) concerning his interpretation of Dunhuang documents on Bon. In his article, Stein (1988: 28, 40) mispresents my view stating that I have cited *PT* 239 to prove the existence of the 'organised Bon' of the later tradition in the royal period. This is far from what I have tried to demonstrate. My view is that a number of Dunhuang MSS like the one in the present article attest the existence of a widespread belief designated as Bon in the royal period and that this is different from the 'organised Bon' by which we mean what the Buddhists call *bsgyur bon* and later Bonpo tradition call *g.yung drung bon*. Stein (1988: 40) does not help us elucidate the line (No. 68): *mu stegs bon la yid ches ste/* He skips and then goes on to say that the word *mo bon* does not mean 'the Bon', but nobody has said that. According to him (1988: 28, 40), the term *bon* in the line *bon yas 'dod smrang* of *PT* 239 stands for *bon-(po)*, 'priest' and *bon* on itself for 'un rite' (1988: 52). In my view the suggestion that one must add the syllable *po* to the term *bon* so as to make *bon-(po)*, 'priest' is unsatisfactory and even arbitrary.

Paris, August 1996



# The Interview between Phyva Keng-tse Lan-med and Confucius

In recent years the question of the antiquity of *ZM*[1] has been brought to the surface by some Tibetologists, but the problem is still far from

1. It is one of the three versions of gShen-rab's life and is said to have been discovered by Drang-rje gSer-mig in bSam-yas (*ZM*, ch. xviii, fol. 291b; *BS*, No. 22, p. 751; *LShDz* , Karmay, 1972:.4, n.1, p.162).
2. A.-M. Blondeau (1971: 45-47) has rejected the hypothesis that *ZM* was modelled on the *bKa' thang* sections. This proposal finds no lack of confirmation in recently published Bonpo sources.
In the following works by 'A-zha Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1198-1263) several passages are quoted from *ZM*, but without mention of the actual title: *gZer mig*. The author refers to his source as simply *mdo* or gives no reference at all. This seems to suggest that *ZM* was too well known a work to necessitate mention of its title, because for most other quotations he has given proper references to his sources. Here are some examples of the passages which I have traced back to *ZM*.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *YK, 21* | *ston pa'i bka' la ... yi brten/* | *ZM*, ch. xviii, 202b6 |
| *PhM, 486* | *ston pa'i bka' la ... yi brten/* | ch. xviii, 202b6 |
| *YK, 50* | *kun gzhi rnam pa ... su slong/* | ch. xi, 19b6, 20a6 |
| *DMS,567* | *kun gzhi rnam pa ... su slong/* | ch. xi, 19b6, 20a6 |
| *YK, 104* | *'khor ba thog ma med pa nas/* | ch. xiv, 175a2 |
| *YK, 106* | *shes rab rtsal rdzogs ... sangs rgyas/* | ch. xvi, 226a3 |
| *YK, 106* | *shar phyogs 'jig rten ... te song/* | ch. ix, 183b6 |
| *YK, 113* | *ma rig pa nyid ... rang la 'char/* | ch. viii, 240b5 |
| *YK, 292* | *mi bced 'dul ba'i ... ston par 'ong/* | ch. ix, 226a4 |
| *PhM, 484* | *lus kyang thud la ... thal mo sbyor/* | ch. ix, 152a3 |
| *PhM, 485* | *dbang po ma yengs .. brtan par nyon/* | ch. ix, 152a4 |
| *PhM, 491* | *dam pa'i don du ... rgya ma chad/* | ch. xvi, 239a6 |
| *DMS, 561* | *'phan yul 'dul khrims ... gol bar 'gyur/* | ch. xvi, 226b6 |

According to Bonpo historians the texts discovered by Drang-rje gSer-mig are called *bka' drang nga ma* derived from the name of the above *gter ston* who is also known as Drang-nga mDo-la, Drang-nga btsun-pa or Drang-btsun(*BS* No. 22, p. 751; *LShDz*, Karmay, 1972: 162). In the short account of the life of bZhod-ston dNgos-grub grags-pa (*BS*, No.14, p.323) there is mention of gZhod-ston studying *bka' drang nga ma'i bon*. gZhod-ston dNgos-grub grags-pa also discovered some texts in 1088 (*BS*, No.22, p.740; *LShDz*, Karmay, 1972: 154; Kvaerne, 1971: 230). This account of his life was written by a gZhod-ston bSod-grags whose dates remain unknown.
In the biography of Yar-'brog-pa Me-ston Shes-rab 'od-zer (1058-1132) compiled by his disciple gShen-ston Nam-mkha' rgyal-mtshan (*BS*, No.16) Me-nyag sTag-la me-'bar's death is mentioned and Me-ston was asked to carry out the funeral. He did this according to the *Klong rgyas dkyil 'khor* (p.353): *me nyag stag la me 'bar.bya ba/ bla ma la gus pa'i ston pa cig 'das nas/ bla ma spyan drangs nas/ klong rgyas dkyil*

being solved.[2] Neither its history nor its contents have yet been fully studied. Only its first few chapters have been translated and published.[3] Yet no Tibetologist would undervalue its importance since it represents a distinct trend in Tibetan literature. Its different style, expression, vocabulary and above all different ideas may be perceived at once by those

*'khor tshad ldan gzhung bzhin byas pa'i steng du pur sbyongs/.* Now the *Klong rgyas dkyil 'khor* is mainly taken from ch. xiv and other ritual parts of ch. v, vi, ix, and xiii of *ZM*. According to the tradition, this funeral ritual was first performed by gShen-rab, and when he died his disciples used it for his own funeral (*ZM* ch. xix, 265a, 267a, 271b). Thus ch. xiv was extracted with other ritual parts from the main body of *ZM* for general use and exists today in that form (for one example: T 0215, Ecole Française d'Extrême-orient, Paris). It is the most important funeral ritual of the Bonpo. Two commentaries on this particular ritual were composed (*LShDz* , Karmay, 1972: 4, n.1). The biography of Me-ston also quotes the following phrases from *ZM* (p. 362): *lta ba yas phub/ spyod pa mas 'dzegs/* (*ZM* ch. xv, 216a2).

In *DKT* Me-ston Shes-rab 'od-zer has quoted extensive passages from ch. xvi of *ZM* without mentioning any title, but simply refers to it by saying *ston pas gsungs* 'the teacher said' (fols. 27b, 28b, 29b). The passages quoted are found in *ZM* (ch. xv, 197a-200a). *DKT* is one of the five works by Me-ston known as the *bka' brten sde lnga* (*BS*, No.16, p.372). The edition of *DKT* I consulted has no colophon, but the fact that it is the work of Me-ston is attested by *KTDG* (p.14). A commentary on *DKT* by mNyam-med Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan (1356-1415) is also recorded in *KTDG* (p.14); *DKT* is the earliest work quoting passages from *ZM* available at present. The fact that neither 'A-zha nor Me-ston mentions the actual title *gZer mig* makes one wonder if the whole work existed in their time in its present form. The passages quoted by Me-ston are from ch. xviii, whereas those in 'A-zha's works are taken from many chapters with only one passage from ch. xi and nothing from ch. x or xii. It is precisely these chapters that have parallel passages in the *lHa 'dre* and *bTsun mo bka' thang* (Blondeau, 1971: 34-39). Ch. x, xi, and xii are mainly narrative, and since 'A-zha was only concerned with passages of philosophical significance which he needed for his *YK, PhM,* and *DMS*, it is not surprising that he does not quote from them. This hardly proves that these chapters did not exit in his time. However, there is a possibility that only the ritual parts existed in the time of Me-ston and that the rest of *ZM* had already been added by the time of 'A-zha.

Although *ZM* claims to be a *gter ma,* the compiler commits a *faux pas* in saying that *ZM* was extracted from the *Dus gsum gshen rab khungs kyi mdo* (*ZM*, ch. xviii, 291a; this work is mentioned in *SG* as having been discovered also by Drang-rje gSer-mig, fol. 163a) which is the same as the *mDo 'dus* (*KTDG* 3), but according to other sources it was found along with three other *mdo* by two Bonpo *gter ston* in 961 in a *stūpa* in bSan-yas (*BS*, No.22, p.750; *LShDz*, Karmay, 1972: 160; Kvaerne, 1971: 228).

sGa-ston Tshul-khrims rgyal-mtshan (mentioned in *GRB*, 10) takes a very critical view of *ZM* in his *TB* (fol. 3a): *'o na (g)zer mig kyang...de yang mdo ni cung zad shes rab zhan pa gcig gis sdeb par mngon te/* 'In that case, even with the *gZer mig* ... it is clear that the *mdo* was compiled by a person of low intelligence'. Yet *ZM* is one of the sources for his *KTS* (fol. 27b).

3. A. H. Francke, 1924: III, 3-4, 1926; IV, 2-3, 1927; V, 1, 1928; VI, 2-3, 1930; NS, 1, 2, 1950.



who are familiar with Tibetan Buddhist texts. Its vast vocabulary, indigenous in character, is still patiently awaiting the lexicographers.

The suggestion of Buddhist inspiration in the composition of gShen-rab's life may only be justified as far as the schema of the work is concerned.[4] The actual materials used may often be demonstrated to have a totally different origin. The present article is an attempt to bring to light the kind of materials which the author or the *gter ston* adapted for his purposes in the composition of *ZM*. An excerpt from ch. xiii, translated below, was first read at four seminars given by me in the University of Bergen in 1972.

In ch. xiii Kong-tse, the wise king (*'phrul gyi rgyal po*),[5] is presented as the king of rGya-lag 'od-ma'i-gling, a region in 'Ol-mo lung-ring. Later he becomes a patron-disciple of gShen-rab.[6] In writing this chapter the author has adapted the famous story of the three boys whom Confucius met on a walk,[7] in such a way that without a knowledge of the original story one could hardly tell what was involved in the composition of this part of *ZM*.

The following is a summary of ch. xiii up to the point where the author has adapted the above-mentioned story.[8]

Kong-tse wants to make provision for himself for after his death (*'chi rgyags*). As he was born with 'magic letters' (*'phrul gyi yi ge*) on the palms of his hands, he could consult them to see if it were possible to build a temple unlike those built by man. He perceived in the 'magic letters' that in order to undertake such a project he would need help from non-human beings. Therefore, by means of magic power he forces the chief demon Ha-dha nag-po[9] to help him to build a temple in the ocean. The demon promises to send 100 demon helpers who at once set to work with Kong-tse. So far he has not told his parents about the project, which he and the demons have sworn to keep secret. He worries about his parents and informs them of his plan, but not his wife who later threatens to commit suicide unless she is told of Kong-tse's whereabouts. Kong-tse

4. Snellgrove, 1967: 8.
5. For *'phrul*, see Stein, 1973: 417.
6. *ZM*, ch. xiii, 78b. Confucius is the prototype of Kong-tse 'phrul-gyi rgyal-po, whom the Bonpo tradition makes the author of the *g.Yang sgrub* and the *Sa bdag 'khrugs bcos rin chen 'phreng ba* (*KTDG*,15-16). He is also said to be the inventor of divination, Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho (1813-99), *Shes bya kun khyab*, I, SPS, Vol. 80, Delhi, 1970, 594; Stein, 1959: 228.
7. There are three Dunhuang manuscripts of the story in Tibetan and many in Chinese, *PT* Nos. 992, 1284, and *PC* No. 3883, are edited and translated into French with other versions of the story by Soymié (1954).
8. *ZM*, ch. xiii, 77a2-89b5.
9. He is Gha Ha-dha nag-po who takes part in a ritual of ransom (*glud*), *ZM*, ch. ix, 15a. He is called Ha-dha skyes-gcig in *ZJ* (fol. 45a). See also n.32.

has broken his vow. All the demons abandon the work. Kong-tse leads back his family and then wanders away from his home again towards the north-east feeling distressed and disappointed.

**Translation of the excerpt**

(89b) 'Having crossed nine passes, penetrated nine valleys, cut across nine rives, and seen nine lands, Kong-tse had travelled far and arrived in a valley where the peaks of Iron Mountain and Copper Mountain leant towards each other, almost touching. He was taken aback; he looked up (90a) and down. A hundred people on the sunny side and a hundred on the dark side of the valley were looking down towards the great highway where some noisy boys were shouting *'khu, khu, di ri ri'*. He went up to them. One boy was wearing a robe of ibex skin with traingular sleeves and was carrying a golden sword; another was wearing a robe of goatskin, and carrying an iron saw, and the other was wearing an old woollen cloak,[10] and carrying a crystal rosary. The one with the rosary was a short distance away with his eyes half closed.[11] The other two were throwing turquoise-patterned golden dice[12] on two dice-cloths, one white, the other black, and shouting loudly as they played, their sweat dripping.

Kong-tse said to the boy wearing the woollen cloak: 'Are you ill? If I ask you a question would you feel like answering?'

The boy opened his eyes, looked, and said to the traveller: 'What's up, traveller? Why should one who is ill come down to the highway? (90b) Your behaviour shows that you are wandering afar, with you mind left behind at home. Why?'

T (traveller): 'if you are not ill, what's the matter? You are not looking, let alone playing wth your friends who are playing dice furiously, with their sweat dripping'.[13]

10. By *rtsi ber* I understand 'woollen cloak', but *rtsi* denoting wool is not found in dictionaries. Corrected to *rtsid*, it would then mean a cloak made of yak hair, but the form *rtsi*, is found consistently in our text as well as in *ZJ* (fol. 23b) and *DKT* (fol. 8b).
11. *Cf.* Soymié, 1954: 313; *PT* 992, 1. 2.
12. *Cho lo* is probably a transcription of *shuanglu* (Soymié, 1954: 345, n.2), but I do not kow what kind of game this *shuanglu* is. In Tibetan *cho lo* is the name of the game itself as well as that of the dice with which it is played. In *ZM* the number of *cho lo* is 5 (ch. xiii, 98b) with 12 designations (fol. 99a), whereas in *ZJ* (fol. 25a) there are 12 *cho lo: da gser gyi cho lo bcu gnyis 'di/ dang po 'byung ba'i khungs bzang ste/ ma ha rus sbal lhu tsigs las byung/* "Now, these twelve golden dice have a good origin. They came out of the joints of the body of the great tortoise". Although *cho lo* denotes 'dice' (Chos-kyi grags-pa, *Tibetan-Chinese dictionary*, Peking, 1957), dice does not seem to be the exact game being played. For Laufer (1916: 4) *cho lo* denotes 'chess'. In *ZJ* (fol. 23a) the boy wearing a robe of goatskin has his own dice made of iron with inlaid copper patterns (*lcags kyi cho lo la zangs kyi ri mo can*) and he plays on the black dice-cloth.
13. *Cf. PT* 992, II. 1-3.



B (boy): 'don't collect useless things, it may bring you to the law-court. Don't carry valuable things entrusted to you, it may cause worry. Even if your stomach is full, don't quarrel, you may lose your precious life. Even if you aren't too busy, don't play with dice, people will ridicule you and your fields will be laid waste. Bad language hurts your friends; violent movement stirs sickness in the body. If you lose your anger, you will plunge into an ocean of grief. Do you think that I am the sort of man who would play dice?'[14]

T: 'Boy, what is the name of the man who taught you these words?'[15]

B: 'The light of my precious body serves as the pages of a book; my heart is a magic treasure which serves as the subject; the sun-rays of my senses draw the lines of truth; the adhesive moisture of my intellect sticks together the syllables of words. (91a) As I possess wisdom, my tongue, the magic key, can open (the magic treasure) and use it whenever I want. Do I need a teacher?'[16]

The traveller was amazed. He descended from the horse-cart and said to the boy: 'What an eloquent boy you are! What clan do you belong to? What are your parents called? What is your name?'[17]

B: 'What a chatterbox you are, you lazy traveller. What is the animal called who is sent to be sold? What's up that you ask my clan name? What's happened to you that you ask the names of the father and mother of a man on an empty plain? Do you keep the names of all the people you come across? What's the use of it?'[18]

T: 'You are an intelligent boy, but it's not polite not to answer questions. We met here because of our *karma*, let us take an oath and become friends'.[19]

(91b) B: 'What's the use of making friends with a distant traveller? What happened to us that we who have just met on an empty plain should take an oath? If the meritorious work we have done before is not in harmony we certainly cannot wish to follow the same teaching of the same teacher. If the force of previous wishes is there, even if we don't swear we shall be of use to each other'.

T: 'You are a wise boy, but it's not polite to refuse again and again. If you don't want to make friends, let one of us offer food, take the other along and eat'.[20]

14. *Cf. ibid.*, II. 5-9.
15. *Cf. ibid.*, II. 9-10.
16. *Cf. ibid.*, II. 10-14.
17. *Cf. ibid.*, I. 14.
18. *Cf. ibid.*, II. 14-15.
19. *Cf. ibid.*, II. 35-6.
20. *Cf. ibid.*, II. 35-6.

B: 'That won't do either, I won't do it. If one goes as a guest without an invitation the host immediately loses faith. If one eats food not given, eventully bad results will arise in the next life. Generally it is not wise to hanker after things or to be devious'.[21]

T: 'You obstinate boy. You just don't reply. If either of us has an enemy, one should at least take the other's side'.[22] (92a)

B: 'Every living being will have enemies and friends because of *karma*. As one cannot overcome one's own enemy, if one uses one's strength to overcome the enemy of a friend, and one is harmed by a sharp weapon, then much regret will arise. If it comes to a question of life or death, there is no need to mention how much greater the regret. Keep a level mind, have no enemies and be peaceful'.[23]

T: 'You sharp-minded boy, aren't you going to reply straightforwardly to even one question? Say something straightforward'.

B: 'You, traveller, have a small rational mind. You like talking nonsense. Don't be distracted by chatter. Go to a place that is worth while. The work of those who like the doctrine cannot possibly be accomplished quickly. Laziness is an enemy. Diligence is kin. Be diligent and go to a place that is worth while'.

T: 'How clever your flow of words. Your beautiful words deserve to be valued and desired. If you don't talk straightforwardly, (92b) I won't leave, but will remain with you'.

B: 'Don't get keen on the doctrine of Bon of the Master Sage; if you do, you won't reach any conclusions with Bon of Inspired Teachings. Don't get keen on the doctrine of Black Waters; if you do, you won't unravel the meaning with the Bon of rGyud. Don't get keen on the doctrine of 'Phan-yul; if you do, you'll never get through the vast number with the Bon of mDo. Don't get keen on the doctirne of White Waters; if you do, you'll never be satisfied with the Bon of Spells.[24] Don't get keen on the doctrine of the Pervasive Pure Summit; if you do, you'll never reach the centre with the Bon of Precepts.You childish traveller, don't you understand that I am teaching you the truth? Go quickly to a place that is worth while'.

T: 'There's no such thing as truth. You are joking,[25] boy, even though I don't know your origins, I will follow you through a hundred lives'.

B: 'The king should not take interest in the doctrine; if he does, he will never tend the affairs of state. The ministers should not take interest

21. *Cf. ibid.*, I. 39.
22. *Cf. ibid.*, I. 37.
23. *Cf. ibid.*, II. 39-40.
24. Concerning these teachings, see Snellgrove, 1967: 16-19.
25. *'gan ma lab* (or *lad*) = *ku re* 'joke' (*PS*, fol. 30).



in the doctrine; if they do, they'll never be able to propose the subject for discussion. The people should not take interest in the doctrine; if they do, they won't get the harvest in time.[26] A traveller should not take interest in the doctrine; if he does, he won't arrive at the inn in time.[27] If you still don't understand all that I've taught you, you are perfectly stupid. If not you must be under the influence of a demon or maybe you are mad. I cannot be sure'.

The traveller thought without replying: 'In my early life I was very lucky, everthing came according to my wishes. In later life, I'm unlucky, my virtuous work remains unfinished. Distressed I wandered away. Now I've met a boy like this, who, whatever I ask, does not reply but says exactly the opposite. It is he who is unlucky', he thought. All of a sudden, confidently he went up to beat the boy on the back with his silver sceptre. The boy leapt aside and escaped, the sceptre missed. The boy, a target's distance away, with a pleased expression on his face, said to the traveller: (93b) 'How childish you are, traveller, to like the doctrine! First, you asked me, the man on the empty plain, whether I was ill. Next, you didn't answer any of my questions, and lastly you became angry and jumped on me to fight. Why should we fight without cause? Won't the people listening jeer at us? Don't beat me with that silver sceptre, I won't act as your opponent'.

Kong-tse had second thoughts, and thinking that what the boy said was true, felt regretful. The traveller thought again that he should try to subdue the boy by argument and said: 'Boy, I tried to be friends with you, but could not. I tried to fight you but could not. I tried to talk to you but could not. If you were that much better than me, you would have jewels of gold and turquoise like me, but you have only a crystal rosary. What's wrong with you?'

B: 'If one is happy in the eternal realm, reciting the *mantra* of the god of wisdom with a crystal rosary of 108 beads, with which one can keep count without mistake, then one can see how poor you are, traveller, (94a) decked out in your gold and turquoise. You walk with the ocean of suffering, worrying about losing them'.

T: 'If you are that much better than me, you would wear silk and furs like me, but you wear only an old woollen cloak. What's wrong with you? There's no difference between you and a beggar'

26. *Cf. PT* 992, II. 27-30.
27. *ibid.*, I. 27: *rgyal po sten la dad ches dang 'bangs kyi chis myi byed/* "Quand le roi s'y adonna avec une grand passion, les affaires des sujets ne sont pas traitées". Here it is a question of playing *dmyig mang*,'chess' (Chos-kyi grags-pa, *op. cit.*; *mig mangs*) whereas in *PC* 3883, it is *shuanglu*, see n.12. The author of *ZM* has changed the original *sten* to *bstan pa*.

B: 'When I see that I am wearing warm inconspicuous satisfying clothes, that are easy to get and so no worry if they wear out, then I see how poor you are, traveller, wearing your silk and furs. You walk with the ocean of suffering, worrying lest they wear out'.

T: 'If everything to do with me is wrong and everything to do with you is right, then you would be surrounded by attendants like me, but you suppress your strength and remain alone. What's happened to you?'

B: 'I make myself serve me. How can it be right to make others serve me? If, for my own purposes I make someone else serve me, when I die retribution will follow. In order not to have retribution following, I avoid attendants and wealth. (94b) Can't you see the sweat overflowing like water from the strong men who are your attendants, because they use their strength to pull your cart? Won't retribution follow you when you die? O poor traveller! You take wrong for right. I have no faith in illusory wealth'.

Meanwhile, Kong-tse thought: 'This boy seems to be the virtuous type who sees everthying as illusion. Is he really good or not?'

Surveying all round he said grandly: '*Ah yi!* Boy dressed in wool! Up there in the north is a man searching for a happy place, in front of him four uncrossable rivers flow; five frightful enemies grab at him from behind. In order to cross the four uncrossable rivers, without being caught by the five frightful enemies, what is good to use for the boat-fare? What is good to use for the boat? What is good to use for the oars? What is good to use for the ferryman? Tell me this much'.

B: '*Ah yi!* Traveller with your cart! It seems to me that you pose questions. (95a) Up in the north, that man is nothing else but the mind. The happy place is the realm of Bon. As for the obstacles to crossing the four uncrossable rivers, aren't they birth, old age, sickness, and death! As for the seizing by the five frightful enemies, aren't they the cause of *saṃsāra*, the five passions? For crossing the four uncrossable rivers without being caught by the five frightful enemies, for the boat-fare, give alms, for the boat, observe the vows, for the oars, learn wisdom, for the boatman, meditate. Anyone who has all these is an excellent saint. He will cross the four uncrossable rivers. Thus I explain your questions'.

Looking in the distance towards the west, the traveller said, '*Ah yi!* Boy in your woollen cloak! You have obtained power over speech and thought, and so at words, you are best among the wise. Over there in the west, there are five suns shining, and a golden *stūpa* built of nine storeys. Do you have any idea what each sun is shining on? Tell me this much'.

B: '*Ah yi!* Traveller with your cart! (95b) It seems to me that you pose questions. The imperishable *stūpa* made of gold over in the west is to be kept as an object of worship, the nine storeys represent the nine ways.[28] As for the five suns of insight that are shining, one shines on the master god. If I tell you the real meaning of its shining on the master god, it is insight shining on the realm of void. One shines on Abo father If I tell you the real meaning of its shining on Abo father, it is wisdom shining on means. One shines on Aza mother. If I tell you the real meaning of its shining on Aza mother, it is precept shining on inspired teachings. One shines on all brothers and sisters. If I tell you the real meaning of its shining on all brothers and sisters, it is vow shining on fraternal love. One shines on self. If I tell you the real meaning of its shining on self, it is intellect shining on itself. Thus I explain your questions'.

Again looking in the distance towards the south, the traveller said, '*Ah yi!* Boy in your woollen cloak, in whom wisdom shines from within! In the south there is a white female *mdzo* without horns, (96a) loaded with five bundles and eight sacks, beaten by three, ridden by two, and led by one. Have you any idea where they have been and where they are going?'

B: '*Ah yi!* Traveller with your cart! It seems to me that you pose questions. Down there in the south, the *mdzo* signifies strength, female signifies source, white signifies purity in vows, that she has no horns signifies harmlessness. That she has eight sacks signifies the eight senses, the five bundles signify the five wisdoms, beaten by three signifies body, speech, and mind, ridden by two signifies father and mother, led by one signifies the *bodhicitta*. They set out on the imperishable path. They are going to a place unreachable by travel. Thus I explain your questions'.

Again looking in the distance towards the east, the traveller said, '*Ah yi!* Boy in your woollen cloak! Over there in the east, a man is born. He is pleased when on earth dark becomes light. He worries terribly about his stomach, the clothes on his back, and his debts. In order to fill his stomach, cover his back, and pay his debts, he does the customary work in the fields. (96b) What is good to use for the field? What is good to use for the soil? What is good to use for the plough? What is good to use for the ploughman? What is good to use for the seed basket? What is straight to use for the furrows? O quick and sensitive, faithful and fortunate, meritorious boy, explain to me my questons'.

B: '*Ah yi!* Traveller with your cart! It seems to me that you pose questions. (Here the boy repeats the passage preceding the questions: 'Over there in the east... fields'.) Paper is good to use for the fields. Ink is good to use for the soil. A pen is convenient to use fot the plough. Thumb and finger are good to use for the ploughman. An inkpot is

28. For these, see Snellgrove, 1967: 9-11.

essential to use for the seed basket. A ruler is straight enough to use for the furrows. He who works in his fields like that will find imperishable treasure. So, happy both when alive and after death, one ought to work in the fields properly. Thus I explain your questions'.[29]

Then Kong-tse, the wise king, realized that the boy in woollen clothes was a kind of Eternal Being, and with his attendants circumambulated him three times offering flowers; kneeling down and clasping his hands, Kong-tse said to him: 'What a wonderful boy! You have a crystal mind in which the world is reflected as in a clear mirror. I disputed with you in my ignorance. I confess all this to your body, speech, and mind, you boy, Eternal Being! The whole story of my life is clear in your mind. How can I accomplish my virtuous work which remains unfinished? I beg you to explain to me about yourself and the boys who play dice'.

B: '*Ah!* A king, Chinese by birth; Kong-tse, the wise king! It is very good that you question me. I have already tested how much faith and courage you have in the pursuit of virtuous work. In this you are very faithful. (97b) Your partience is not yet exhausted. You wandered away in distress, but you met me due to your accomulation of merit. Now your wish will be accomplished. To tell you the truth, here is the explanation: the name of this place is the Peak of the Gorge at Spreading Pass. It is the meeting-point of the frontiers of the four kings.[30] The hundred people who watch on the sunny side of the valley are saying prayers for the gods to win. The hundred people who watch on the dark side are cursing (the gods) so that the demons might win. Of the three of us the one wearing a robe of ibex skin with triangular sleeves and carrying a golden sword is the god called the Prayer-born One. The boy wearing a robe of goatskin and carryng an iron saw is the demon called the One Born from the Misery of Curses. The boy wearing an old woollen cloak and carrying a crystal rosary, myself, is called Phyva Keng-tse lan-med.[31] The first two are

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29. *Cf. PT* 992, II. 50-61.
30. *ZM*, ch. iii, 26a; *srid pa'i lha rgyal po chen po bzhi*, the four kings, the gods of the world. *ZM* (ch. v, 52b) and *ZJ* (fol. 24a): *srid pa'i gzu bo bzhi*, 'the four mediators of the world', but nowhere is their identity mentioned. The place is described as *lha srin gnyis kyi sa mtshams*,'the frontier of the gods and demons' (*ZM*, ch. v, 32b; *ZJ* fol. 24a). This place is also referred to as *lha srin 'thab sa* 'the battle-field of the gods and demons' (*cf. ZM*, ch. v, 53a).
31. This name is very curious yet it is the form found in every Bonpo source where it is mentioned. No doubt *keng* is a corrupt form of *kong* and *lan med*, 'without reply' is because the boy to whom Kong-tse asks questions never replies, but instead asks Kong-tse his own questions. Hence 'the One who does not reply to Kong-tse'. But why Phyva? The Phyva are very important in Bonpo mythology. Their residence is up in the sky known as sNar-ma glegs-bzhi, *gnam gyi yab bla* (*ZM*, ch. xi, 18a1: *ya bla*) *dgung gi yang steng* (*PT* 1134, and Thomas, 1957: iA: *ya stengs na/ mgon btsun* (*PT* 1134: *'gon btsun;* Thomas, 1957: iA: *mgon tshun*) *phyva'i yul snar ma glegs bzhi na...* (*ZM*, ch. iii, 19a3). sNar-ma glegs-bzhi brings to mind the god Ku-spyi ser-bzhi in *PT*



1038. This extremely important manuscript was first studied by Lalou (1953: 275-6) and has further been thoroughly studied by Macdonald (1971, 215-19). Ariane Macdonald is of the opinion that it is a Bonpo redaction. Ku-spyi ser-bzhi may have some connexion with Ku-byi mang-ske, a god of wisdom residing on Kailāśa (*DzG*, fols. 3a, 24b, 32a). The Phyva are closely related to dMu. dMu-rgyal Thod-dkar, sixth in the dMu lineage, and the father of gShen-rab, is the son of dMu-rgyal Them-pa-skas, whose wife is the lady of Phyva, Phyva-za Ngang-'brang-ma (*NG* fol. 73b).There are altogether six dMu-rgyal, who are descendants of the six 'Then (*GRB* fol. 24; Stein, 1959: 69). gShen-rab frequents sNar-ma glegs-bzhi, which is described as the country of his paternal uncle (*zhang po phyva'i yul*),where he has also a Phyva lady friend, Phyva-lcam Gong-ma-ron (*ZM*, ch. xii, 64b4).
On the other hand, the first king of Tibet, Nyag-khri btsan-po, is considered to be a descendant of Phyva-rje Yab-bla bdal-drug (Thomas, 1957, iA: *bdag drug*), who is eighth in the Phyva lineage counting from Phyva-rje sGam-po (*NG*, fol. 38a). Yab-bla bdal-drug has many women, but it was from the lady of dMu, mChong-ron-ma (rMu-rtsan khri-sman, *ShDz*, 151) that the seven brothers called *lhe'u rje* were born. The fourth of the seven (*bdun tshigs*) was appointed king of the Tibetans by his father (*yab kyis bod khams mi yi rje ru bskos/, NyZG*, fol. 147a) and he took the lady of dMu, Khro-'bring-ma (gNyis-mthing-ma, *SG*, fol. 37b; Bre-btsan-ma, *ShDz*, 151), to whom a son, Nyag-khri bstan-po, was born (*LShDz*, Karmay, 1972: 32, n.5; *cf.* Stein, 1959: 58, n.165). The seven *lhe'u rje* are described as gods of magic (*rdzu 'phrul gyi lha, ZM* ch. vii, 114a1). This story found in *ShDz*. (pp.147-52) is slightly different from the versions in other Bonpo sources (for a summary of this section in *ShDz*, see Macdonald, 1971: 206-10). However, in *PT* 126.2, it is the Phyva who are asking the dMu for a king to rule over man, which is therefore a different story, but contains certain echoes of 'Ol-mo lung-ring, when the country of dMu is described as guarded by gorges full of tigers and leopards (*stag 'phrang gzig 'phrang*). *NyZG*, (fol.39a) relates that the peoples of 'Ol-mo lung-ring are descendants of dMu, and that the Tibetans are from Phyva and the people of Bru-sha (Gilgit) are from gTsug. For the Phyva as creators of the world and the archetype of the Tibetan kings, see Macdonald, 1971: 350-3.
Phyva are believed to look after the lives of living beings and promote their good fortune. The first of the nine sons of Sangs-po 'bum-khri are known as *phyva srid skos gsum* i.e. Phyva-rje Ring-dkar (*alias* Phyva-rje sGam-po), Srid-rje 'Brang-dkar, and sKos-rje Drang-dkar. The task of Phyva-rje Ring-dkar is to protect the lives of living beings (*GG*, 54): *skye 'gro dbugs kyis bsdus pa thams cad kyi/ tshe rdzi dang srog skyabs byed pas phyva sde'o/. GG* (p. 58) further explains the meaning of *phyva* and *g.yang* and, after listing some *phyva* gods including Yab-bla bdal-drug, it goes on to say; *de rnams phyva dang g.yang gi bdag po lags so/ de yang don du phyva zer na g.yung drung gi tshe/ g.yang zer na de nyid kyi bcud du bstan pa'o/* "There are the masters of *phyva* and *g.yang; phyva* means everlasting life and *g.yang* means the essence (of life)" (also *cf. GG*, 62). Hence the words *phyva tshe* and *phyva g.yang* are frequently used in rituals. However, in early texts, *phyva* has no other meaning but a class of gods, *cf.* Article No. 17, n.9.
When the father of gShen-rab and gShen-rab himself married it was the *phyva* gods who came to summon the 'essence of fortune of everlasting life' (*ZM*, ch. ii, 17a4; ch. viii, 117b5). Also see Stein, 1959: 61. Phyva Keng-tse lan-med presents himself as a son of Sangs-po 'bum-khri, the original ancestor of living beings (*ZJ*, fol. 21a).
The *phyva* gods are also considered to be the learned ones: *sgam po phyva*.(*ZM*, ch. xiv, 118b). Phyva-rje sGam-po 'the Lord of the *phyva* gods, the Wise One'. It was in their heaven, sNar-ma glegs-gzhi, the city of mGon-btsun-phyva (*mgon btsun phyva'i grong khyer du, ZM*, ch. i, 4b,1) that the three young brothers (*khye'u spun gsum, ZM*, ch. i, 3b,1) formerly studied Bon. These three brothers became the teachers of the past, present (= gShen-rab), and future. The last one is believed to be still studying there (*ZM*, ch. i, 3b2, 4b,1; ch. x, 256b,3; ch. xvii, 277a, 5; ch. xviii, 284b,4; *BS*, No. 22, p. 569).

fighting with golden dice, one for the gods, the other for the demons. I was acting as witness to see the outcome of the fight, when you came across me. It is very good that you came!'



*Plate 15: Inscription: Phyva Keng-tse lan-myed sprul sku. Illumination from a manuscript of ZM. Waddell la. Photo. Courtesy of the Orientalische Abteilung der Staatsbibliothek, Preussischer Kulture-besitz, Berlin.*

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The *phyva* gods are also the heavenly artists. They are referred to as *skos mkhan phyva* 'Phyva, the Supervisor' (*ZM*, ch. v, 58a,3; ch. xiv, 118b, 2). It is therefore not surprising that Phyva Keng-tse lan-med should supervise the building of the temple. This brings to mind the *phyva mkhan* ('supervisor', 'designer','architect') who seems to be a Nepalese, and plays an important role in building bSam-yas (Stein, 1961, 31, 35, 45). The term *phyva mkhan* also occurs in other texts, see *KhG*, f.140a,5. Hsiang T'o of *PC* 3883 is the protype of the boy wearing the woollen cloak i.e. Phyva Keng-tse lan-med who has become a god of wisdom (*shes rab kyi lha*) for the Bonpo (sPa bsTan-rgyal bzang-po, *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud kyi bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar*, composed in 1419, *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud, Ka*, SPS, Vol. 73, Delhi, 1968, 110). Hsiang T'o is mentiond only in the Chinese version as the name of the clever boy, aged seven. The Tibetan versions do not indicate any name or age.
In a prophecy, Phyva Keng-tse lan-med told Khro-tshang 'Brug-lha (956-1077), a Bonpo *gter ston*, to find some texts which Khro-tshang 'Brug-lha accordingly discovered and which include the *Keng tse sgrub skor*, texts of prayers to Phyva Keng-tse lan-med asking for the bestowal of wisdom (*LShDz*, Karmay, 1972: 124, 288). Khro-tshang 'Brug-lha was a friend of Pha Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas (Kong-srpul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho, *op. cit.*, I, 534; also *cf. BS*, No. 22, p. 727). In the Bonpo tradition, this god of wisdom is often presented as a little boy.



I shall now give a summary of the rest of the chapter as its translation would go beyond the scope of the present article.

With Kong-tse's help the gods triumph, which anticipates Kong-tse's success in the accomplishment of his unfinished temple. Keng-tse lan-med predicts that within seven days gods, *nāgas*, *phyva*, and man will come to continue the construction and that he himself will supervise the work. When it is completed Ha-dha nag-po skyes-cig and other demons come back to destroy it, because it was they who laid the foudations first and anyway Kong-tse had broken his word. But after saying payers to gShen-rab, Kong-tse manages to save the temple, which later becomes a depository of gShen-rab's books and images.[32]

A comparison of the story in *ZM* with the Dunhuang version reveals a considerable development of the theme. The motive of the author of *ZM* is totally different, but there is no doubt as to the origin of the story. In ch. xiii of *ZM* the adaptation of mundane Chinese tale to a mythological Bonpo context has not always gone smoothly. This might explain the presence of obscure parts and also the uneasiness in the presentation of the dialogue. But with what version of the story was the author in contact? This depends on the precise date of the *ZM*'s composition, which at present can only be discussed in terms of probabilities.

In Tibet I never came across the story of Confucius's meeting the three boys. The only known Tibetan versions were found with the Chinese ones in the Dunhuang cave, which was closed in about 1035 and not reopened until the present century. The modern Chinese version came to light only in the nineteenth century in Canton and only two copies of it have been found so far. M. Soymié (1954) considers that other Tibetan versions apart from those found in Dunhuang may have been extant in Tibet, as the Mongol Buddhist version was probably adapted from another Tibetan version and should not be earlier than the thirteenth century and may even be very late. The Mongol version, however, does not seem to have any particular relation to the story in *ZM* as far as I can judge from

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32. In *ZJ* (fols. 55a-57a) gShen-rab averts Ha-dha nag-po skyes-cig's attack on the temple by transforming himself into a god called rNam-par rgyal-ba and four other terrifying divinities and the frightened demon faints. Kong-tse, pointing to the heart of the demon with his sceptre, recites a *mantra* which purifies the demon's sins. So when he regains consciousness he has already become a god and gShen-rab gives him the name of gCen-lha mig-dgu, and makes him protector of the temple. Ha-dha's entourage consists of four demons (*ZM*, ch. xiii, 104b; *ZJ* fol. 45b): Gar-ma dza-la(?), Rag-sha (*rakṣa*) glang-mgo (= Yama), Dha-sha ghri-ba (Daśagrīva),and Yakṣa kho-re. The last two are personages in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, see De Jong, 1972: 193. A ritual propitiating gCen-lha mig-dgu and his entourage is contained in the ritual text known as the *rNam rgyal rgya nag ma* (*LShDz*, Karmay, 1972: 174). A similar text has been referred to by Stein, 1959: 29, n. 71. Also see *KTDG*, 15.

the summary given by Soymié (1954: 48-50). The possibility of the existence of *ZM* in the eleventh century has already been discussed.

As we have seen, the climax of the story in *ZM* is the completion of the temple. None of the Dunhuang Tibetan versions suggests any such building. It is only in *PC* 3883, that one reads of Confucius building 'funeral temples'. On the other hand, in the Tibetan versions the relation of a man to his mother is compared to the light of the moon, whilst his relation with his wife is compared to the light of the stars. This is not in *PC* 3883, but is found in the modern Chinese version. This metaphor seems to be echoed in *ZM*, where there is the question of the sun shining for oneself, one's teacher, father, mother, and friend. Kong-tse's worry about his parents and the fact that he keeps the project secret from his wife reflect the discussion of a man's relation with his mother and wife found in both the Tibetan and Chinese versions.

Further differences are as follows. In *PC* 3883, Confucius kills Hsiang T'o. In *PT* 992, it is neither Kong-tse nor any of the three boys, but another who wants to kill a bird, whereas in the story of *ZM* Kong-tse only tries to beat the clever boy. In *ZM* the two boys play with dice (*cho lo*), but in *PC* 3883, it is Confucious who proposes to play the game of *shuanglu* which he has in his horse-cart and in *PT* 992, Kong-tse has a game of *dmyig mang* 'chess' but no *shuanglu*. These are but a few examples, and there are many ideas and metaphors in *ZM* that are not found either in *PC* 3883, or *PT* 992.

However, in view of the mention of *cho lo* (*shuanglu*) and the temple, the author of *ZM* or his source seems to have been in contact with a version nearer to *PC* 3883, than to the type represented by *PT* 992.

**Tibetan text**

(89b) kong tses[33] la dgu brgal/ lung dgu phogs/ chu dgu bcad/ yul dgu mthong nas/ pha mthar phyin tsam na/ zang ri lcags ri spyi bo 'phrad pa'i lung pa zhig tu phyin/ a cang skyi 'jigs yar bltas (90a) mar bltas na/ lung pa de yi gdags la mi brgya blta/ lung pa'i srib la mi brgya blta/ lung pa de yi mdo drang lam po che gcig na/ khye'u chung nga ro can gsum khu sgra di ri ri snang nas/ drung du phyin tsam na/ khye'u chung skyin gyi ral ka can gser gyi ral gri thogs pa gcig/ khye'u chung ra yi slag pa can lcags kyi sog le thogs pa gcig/ khye'u chung dug po[34] rtsi ber can shel gyi 'phreng ba bsnams[35] pa gcig/ de ltar gsum snang ba las/ dug po rtsi ber can shel gyi 'phreng ba can de/ pha zad na mig zim me byed nas snang/ gnyis mi 'bod dgu 'bod cing rngul nag sha re re rgyan gzhi dkar

33. *rtse.*
34. *pa.*
35. *beng.*



nag gnyis bting nas/ gser gyi cho lo la g.yu yi ri mo can/ kha nas shar 'debs shing snang/

de la kong tse[36] 'phrul gyi rgyal pos smras pa/ khye'u rtsi ber can/ khyod na ba cig yin nam ngas gtam zhig 'dri na/ smra ba'i nyams khams[37] yod dam/

khye'u rtsi ber can gyis mig phyes nas bltas te/ 'gron po la smras pa/ 'gron po spyod lam kho na re gzhan cig snang/ nad kyis btab pa'i mi bya ba khri lam mdo ru ci la 'ong/ spyod (90b) pa de 'dra na dran pa'i sems yul du bzhags nas/ bem[38] po'i lus byes na 'khyams[39] pa ci yin ang/

yang 'gron pos lan btab pa/ khye'u chung khyod mi na na/ zla bo gnyis ni rngul nag shar re cho lo 'debs/ khyod 'debs pa bas blta yang mi blta ba ci nyes/

yang khye'u chung gis smras pa/ ma 'kho[40] gnyer[41] kha ma byed kha mchus[42] snon pa yin/ bcol yang gdos can ma skyel sems phral 'phral la 'byung/ rgyags kyang 'khrugs pa ma byed rin chen srog dang 'bral/ dal yang cho lo ma rtse mis 'phya so nam 'chag/ kha smras pas rogs kyi zhe 'gems/ lus 'gul bas khong gi nad 'khrugs/ skugs shor na mya ngan gyi mtsho rdol/ cho lo rtse ba'i mi bu[43] nga yin nam/

yang 'gron pos lan btab pa/ khye'u chung rtsi ber can/ de skad bya ba'i tshig de khyod la slob pa'i[44] mi de ji skad bya ba zhig yin/

yang khye'u chung gis smras pa/ nga lus rin po che 'od kyi dpe yis[45] gzhi snying 'phrul gyi bang mdzod kyis don gyi khog phub/ dbang po nyi ma'i zer gyis bden pa'i lam drangs/ rig pa gar spyin gyi rlan gyis tshig gi[46] 'bru sbyar/ blo (91a) rig pa'i ye shes dang ldan pas/ lce 'phrul gyi lde mig gis phye zhing nam dgos dgos kyi dus na spyod pa la/ slob dpon gcig kyang dgos sam/

de la 'gron po ngo mtshar skyes nas/ shing rta'i kha nas babs te/ yang khye'u chung la lan btab pa/ 'byor ba'i tshig dang ldan pa'i khye'u chung khyad par can/ khyod rus[47] ni gang gtogs pa zhig yin/ pha dang ma ni ji skad bya ba zhig yin/ khyod dag rang gi ming ni cir 'dogs pa zhig yin/

36. *rtse.*
37. *kham.*
38. *bems.*
39. *'khyam.*
40. *bkhol.*
41. *gnyen.*
42. *mchu'i.*
43. *spu.*
44. *ba'i.*
45. *yi.*
46. *gis.*
47. *rigs.*

yang khye'u chung gis smras pa/ ga la'i 'gron po khyod kyang re gcol chung zhig snang/ tshong la gtong ba'i phyugs la bya ba skad/ rus gsher[48] nas ci bya/ thang stong mi'i pha dang ma dris nas khyod la ched ci byung/ 'gron po 'phrad dgu la ming cir 'bod pa zhig yin bya ba 'chang ngam lugs kyang ci yod/

yang 'gron pos lan btab pa/ rig[49] pa can gyi khye'u chung cig snang ste/ dris pa'i lan med gcig pu smra la mi legs na/ rang cag las kyis dus 'dir 'phrad pa la/ mna' tho[50] bcad la rogs pa zhig bya na/

yang khye'u chung gis smras pa/ 'gron po rgyang ring (91b) po'i mi rogs po bya na phan lan ci 'ong du re/ thang stong pa'i mi 'phrad ma thag tu mna' skyel[51] ba'i ched 'u bu gnyis la ci byung/ sngon byas las kyi bsod nams mi mthun na/ ston pa gcig gi bstan pa la yang smon lam mi thebs nges/ 'u bu gnyis la snga ma'i smon lam mthu yod na/ mna' ma skyel[52] yang gcig la gcig gis phan te 'ong/

yang 'gron pos lan btab pa/ shes rab can gyi khye'u chung zhig snang ste/ lan med par yang yang zlog pa mi legs na/ rogs po la khyod mi dga' na/ gcig la zan 'dren pa la gcig khrid la za ba tsam zhig bya na/

yang khye'u chung gis smras pa/ 'gron po de yang mi rigs pas mi byed do/ ma bos pa'i 'gron phyin na/ 'phral du yon bdag dad pa zlog/ ma sngos pa'i zas zos na phugs su tshe phyi ma la sgrib pa 'ong/ spyi na yang phyi 'phreng ba dang gzhogs bskrun bya ba'i rigs ma yin no/

yang 'gron pos lan btab pa/ rtul zhugs[53] chen po'i khye'u chung khyod/ lan med kho na ma smra par/ rang re gnyis tha ma yang gcig la dgra byung na/ gcig gi phyogs su sdongs pa zhig (92a) bya na/

yang khye'u chung gis smras pa/ sems can thams cad las kyi dbang gis dgra skal gnyen skal 'ong/ rang gi dgra yang rang gis mi thul bar/ rogs kyi dgra la 'dul ba'i stobs btang na/ rno ba'i mtshon zhig lus la phog tsam na/ de tshe 'gyod pa bsam du med pa 'byung/ srog la bab na 'gyod tshad ci smras dgos/ mnyam pa'i sems kyis dgra med zhi bar gyis/

yang 'gron pos lan btab pa/ rig pa rno ba'i khye'u chung khyod/ nga yis dris pa'i gtam rnams la/ gcig kyang drang por mi smra 'am/ drang tshig legs pa 'ga' smros dang/

yang khye'u chung gis smras pa/ gtan tshigs chung ba'i 'gron po cig/ don med tshig gi sten la dga'/ gcol med tshig la ma yengs par/ don yod yul du chum la snyogs/ bstan la dga' ba'i sems can gyi[54]/ las rnams

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48. *rigs bsher.*
49. *rigs.*
50. *mtho.*
51. *skyal.*
52. *skyal.*
53. *shugs.*
54. *gyis.*



myur du 'grub mi srid/ le lo'i dgra la brtson 'grus snyen/ brtson 'grus bskyed la don sar chos/

yang 'gron pos lan btab pa/ khye'u chung 'brel ba'i tshig la mkhas/ 'brel tshig snyan la chags rin chog/ khyod kyis drang po mi smra[55] na/ mi (92b) 'gro khyod kyi drung du 'dug/

yang khye'u chung gis smras pa/ dpon gsas bstan pa la ma dga'/ dpon gsas bstan pa la dga' na/ lung gi bon la thag mi chod/ chab nag bstan pa la ma dga'/ chab nag bstan pa la dga' na/ rgyud kyi bon khog mi khrol/ 'phan yul bstan pa la ma dga'/ 'phan yul bstan pa la dga' na/ mdo yi bon rtsis mi thebs/ chab dkar bstan pa la ma dga'/ chab dkar bstan pa la dga' na/ sngags pa'i bon phun sum mi 'tshogs/ gtsang mtho thog spyi rgyug bstan pa la ma dga'/ gtsang mtho thog spyi rgyug bstan pa la dga' na/ man ngag gi bon mthil du mi phebs/ gcol bu chung gi 'gron po khyod/ nges don bstan pa mi go 'am/ rings ba'i don sar la'ur songs/

yang 'gron pos lan btab pa/ nges don 'di zhes bya ba med/ 'gan ma lad smra ba'i khye'u khyod/ rgyud dang khungs shig ma chod na/ skye ba brgyar yang khyod phyir 'breng/[56]

yang khye'u chung gis smras pa/ rgyal po bstan pa la ma dga'/ rgyal po bstan pa la dga' na/ rgyal srid kyi khog (93a) mi phubs/ blon po bstan pa la ma dga'/ blon po bstan pa la dga' na/ 'dun ma'i gzhi mi things/ phal pa bstan pa la ma dga'/ phal pa bstan pa la dga' na/ so nam dus su mi 'byor/ 'gron po bstan pa la ma dga'/ 'gron po bstan pa la dga' na/ dgong mal la dus su mi slebs/ ji snyed bstan kyang mi go na/ glen pa yang dag bya ba yin/ yang na bdud kyis bslus pa yin/ snyon pa zhig yin gyi cha yang med/

'gron pos lan ma btab par bsams pa/ nga yang tshe stod la bsod nams che nas bsam pa yid bzhin grub/ tshe smad la bsod nams chung nas/ dge ba yang mal du lus/ yid chad nas 'khyams pas kyang/ ci smras pa lan med log par kho na zer ba'i khye'u chung 'di lta zhig dang 'phrad/ bsod nams kho na re chung sems pas/ dad pas khye'u chung la krug gis song nas/ dngul gyi 'gying dkar khye'u chung gi rked pa kho nar rdeg tu song bas/ khye'u chung myang gis bros pas/ 'gying dkar ma phog go/ khye'u chung 'ben gang tsam nas bzhin bstan nas 'dzum mul le/ 'gron po la smras pa'i mdo/ (93b) 'gron po bstan pa la dga' ba khyod re gcol chung zhig snang/ dang po thang stong mi la na'am zer nas[57] the tshom tshur la 'dzugs/ bar du nga yis dris pa'i lan gcig phyir mi zlog par/ tha mar nyon mongs skyes nas 'thab mo mchong du 'ong ba 'di/ 'o skol gnyis la gleng med par ci la 'thab/ thos pa'i mi rnams kyis kyang 'phya bar mi 'gyur ram/ dngul gyi 'gying dkar bdag la ma rdeg cig/ khyod kyi 'thab zla bdag ni mi bgyid do/

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55. *smras.*
56. *'phreng.*
57. *na.*

kong tse[58] yang blo phyi mas slebs pas/ bden par dran zhing 'gyod pa skyes so/ yang 'gron pos shags kyis 'dul ba dran nas smras pa/ khye'u chung rtsi ber can khyod/ ngas 'dzas kyang 'dza'[59] zlar ma btub/ 'thabs pas 'thab zlar ma btub/ dris pas kyang gtam zlar ma btub/ de snyed tsam du khyod khyad par che ba na/ gser dang g.yu la sogs te/ nga bzhin rgyan mang pos brgyan mod/ shel gyi phreng ba cig las med pa ci nyes/

yang khye'u chung gis smras pa/ bdag g.yung drung klong na bde ba'i sems nyid kyis/ ye shes lha yi snying po ma nor bar/ shel 'phreng rtsa brgyad 'dren pa'i grangs chod na/ gser g.yu spel nas thogs pa'i 'gron (94a) po snying re rje/ stor gyis dogs pa'i sdug bsngal des kyang mya ngan mtsho dang 'grogs/

yang 'gron pos lan btab pa/ khyed de tsam du bzang na/ nga bzhin du lus la dar zab dang/ dbyi dpyang gyon mod/ dug po'i rtsi ber gon pa ci nyes/ mul sprang dang dbye ba khyod la med do/

yang khye'u chung gis smras pa/ bdag btsal bar sla la zad pas mi 'jigs shing/ lus la dro la dben pas chog shes rtsi ber gos mthong na/ dar zab dbyi dpyang gon pa'i 'gron[60] po snying re rje/ zad kyis dogs pa'i sdug bsngal des kyang mya ngan mtsho dang 'grogs/

yang 'gron pos smras pa/ nga yi kun ka skyon du 'dug nas/ khyod kyi yo ga[61] you tan che na/ nga bzhin 'khor mang pos bskor mod/ shin tu shed smad nas gcig pu ci byed/

yang khye'u chung gis smras pa/ bdag ni bdag gi don du bdag nyid 'khol ba las/ gzhan dag sems can bkol du ga na rung/ bdag gi don du gzhan dag bkol ba na/ shi ba'i gnas su lan chags snyegs tu 'ong/ lan chags snyegs pa med par bya ba'i don ched du/ 'khor dang zang zing bdag gis spangs pa yin/ (94b) 'gron po'i 'khor du gyur pa'i mi rnams rtsal po che/ shing rta'i 'khor lo rtsal gyis 'dren 'dren nas/ rngul nag chu bzhin 'brug pa ma mthong ngam/ shi ba'i gnas su nyid la lan chags mi snyeg gam/ skyon la yon tan byed pa'i 'gron po snying re rje/ sgyu ma'i zang zing de la bdag ni dad mi skye/

bar der kong tses[62] bsams pas/ khye'u chung 'di ni thams cad sgyu mar rig pa'i dge ba can zhig kho na 'dra na[63] legs pa yin nam ma yin/

tshig 'phang bstod nas phyogs bzhir lta ba bkyes nas smras pa/ a yi khye'u rtsi ber can/ nyi ma byang phyogs pha ki na/ mi cig bde gnas snyegs pa la/ mi thar chu bzhi mdun nas bab/ 'jigs pa'i dgra lngas phyi nas 'dzin/ 'jigs pa'i dgra lngas mi zin par/ mi thar chu bzhi rgal ba la/[64]

58. *rtse.*
59. *'dzas.*
60. *gran.*
61. *ka.*
62. *rtse.*
63. *nas.*
64. *na.*



gru btsas 'os su gang zhig bzang/ gru gzings 'os su gang zhig bzang/ skya ba'i 'os su gang zhig bzang/ mnyan pa'i 'os su gang zhig bzang/ /de tsam khyod kyis nga la shod/

yang rtsi ber can gyis smras pa/ a yi 'gron po 'khor lo can/ khyod kyis btsugs pa'i the tshom de/ nga yi blo la dris[65] (95a) pa 'dra/ nyi ma byang phyogs pha ki na/ mi cig bya ba nyag gcig sems/ bde gnas bya ba bon nyid dbyings/ mi thar chu bzhis bkag pa ni/ skye rga na 'chi ma yin nam/ 'jigs pa'i dgra lngas bzung ba ni/ dug lnga 'khor ba'i rgyu ma[66] yin nam/ 'jigs pa'i dgra lngas mi zin par/ mi thar chu bzhi rgal ba la/[67] gru btsas 'os su sbyin pa thongs/ gru gzings 'os su tshul khrims srungs/ skya ba'i 'os su shes rab sbyangs/ mnyan pa'i 'os su bsam gtan sgoms/ de rnams gang la tshogs pa ni/ khyad par can gyi skyes mchog yin/ mi thar chu las thar bar 'gyur/ 'gron po'i the tshom de ltar bshad/

yang 'gron pos nub phyogs su lta ba bkyes nas smras pa/ a yi khye'u chung rtsi ber can/ smra bsam gnyis kyi dbang thob nas/ 'byor ba'i tshig la mkhas pa'i mchog/ nyi ma nub phyogs pha ki na/ gser gyi mchod rten dgu brtsegs la/ ye shes nyi ma lnga shar ba/ gang la gang shar cha yod dam/ de tsam khyod kyis nga la shod/

yang rtsi ber can gyis smras pa/ a yi 'gron po 'khor lo can/ (95b) khod kyis btsugs pa'i the tshom de/ nga yi blo la dris[68] pa 'dra/ nyi ma nub phyogs pha ki na/ gser du smon pa'i mi 'gyur sku/ mchod pa'i rten du ma brjed gzungs/ dgu ru brtseg pa theg pa dgu/ ye shes nyi ma lnga shar ba/ gcig ni slob dpon lha la shar/ slob dpon lha la shar ba ni/ nges pa'i don du bshad pa na/ dbyings kyi steng du ye shes shar/ gcig ni a bo yab la shar/ a bo yab la shar ba ni/ nges pa'i don du bshad pa na/ thabs kyi steng du shes rab shar/ gcig ni[69] a za yum la shar/ a za yum la shar ba ni/ nges pa'i don du bshad pa na/ lung gi steng du man ngag shar/ gcig ni mched lcam yongs la shar/ mched lcam yongs la shar ba ni/ nges pa'i don du bshad pa na/ dam tshig steng du brtse gdung shar/ gcig ni a bo rang la shar/ a bo rang la shar ba ni/ nges pa'i don du bshad pa na/ rig pa'i steng du rig pa shar/ 'gron po'i the tshom de ltar bshad/

yang 'gron pos lho phogs kyi lta ba bkyes nas smras pa/ a yi khye'u chung rtsi ber can/ ye rig khong nas shar ba'i khye'u chung/ nyi ma lho phyogs pha ki na/ mdzo mo dkar mo yu (96a) mo la/ lnga sdebs brgyad sngos khal du bkal/ gsum brdeg gnyis zhon gcig gis khrid/ gar 'gro gar phyin cha yod dam/ de tsam khyod kyis nga la shod/

65. *bris.*
66. *absent.*
67. *na.*
68. *bris.*
69. *na.*

yang rtsi ber can gyis smras pa/ a yi 'gron po 'khor lo can/ khyod kyis btsugs pa'i the tshom de/ nga yi blo la dris[70] pa 'dra/ nyi ma lho phyogs pha ki na/ mdzo ru smos pa theg stobs che/ mo ru byung ba'i 'byung ba'i gnas/ dkar mo'i rang bzhin dam tshig gtsang/ yu mo'i lugs kyi rno zug chung/ lnga ru sdebs pas ye shes lnga/ brgyad du bkal bas rnam shes brgyad/ gsum gyis brdeg pa sku gsung thugs/ gnyis kyis zhon pa yab yum gnyis/ gcig gis khrid pa byang chub sems/ 'gags pa med pa'i lam du zhugs/ bgrod pa med pa'i gnas su phyin/ 'gron po'i the tshom de ltar bshad/

yang 'gron pos shar phyogs kyi lta ba bkyes nas smras pa/ a yi khye'u chung rtsi ber can/ nyi ma shar phyogs pha ki na/ mi gcig lus gcig skyes pa yang/ sa thog mun pa dkar bas brod/ lto rgyab bu lon drag pas 'tsher/ lto rgyab bu lon bskang ba'i phyir/ so nam (96b) lugs bzhin bya ba na/ zhing sa'i 'os su gang zhig bzang/ dog gzhi 'os su gang zhig bzang/ thong gshol 'os su gang zhig bzang/ thong mkhan 'os su gang zhig bzang/ shal ba'i 'os su gang zhig drang/ 'du shes myur la tshor ba rkyen/ dad ldan skal ldan bsod can khye'u/ de tsam khyod kyis nga la shod/

yang rtsi ber can gyis smras pa/ a yi 'gron po 'khor lo can/ khod kyis btsugs pa'i the tshom de/ nga yi blo la dris[71] pa 'dra/ nyi ma shar phyogs pha ki na/ mi gcig lus gcig skyes pa la/ sa thog mun pa dkar bas brod/ lto rgyab bu lon bskang ba' phyir/ so nam lugs bzhin bya ba la/ zhing sa'i 'os su shog bu gshin/ dog[72] sa'i 'os su snag tsha bzang/ thong gshol 'os su snyug[73] gu bde/ thong mkhan 'os su mthe mdzub bzang/[74] gzhi skur 'os su ram phyis bcud/ shal ba'i 'os su thig shing drang/ so nam de ltar gang byed pa/ skyes mchog bu la khyad par can/ mi zad gter dang 'phrad pa yin/ gson tshe gshin nas gnyis kar bde/ ma nor so nam spyad par[75] rigs/ 'gron po'i (97a) the tshom de ltar bshad/
kong tse[76] 'phrul gyi rgyal pos kyang/ khye'u rtsi ber can de g.yung drung sems dpa'i rigs shig tu shes nas/ 'khor rnams dang bcas nas/ bskor ba phogs gsum byas/ me tog mang po phul nas pus btsugs thal mo sbyar nas zhus pa'i mdo/ ngo mtshar rmad du byung ba'i khye'u chung khyad par can/ me long g.ya' dag bzhin du snang srid gsal ba'i thugs/ ma rig 'khrul ba'i dbang gis khyod la bdag gis brgal ba kun/ khye'u byang chub sems dpa' nyid kyi sku gsung thugs la mthol lo bshags/ bdag gi[77] lo

70. *bris.*
71. *bris.*
72. *dogs.*
73. *snyu.*
74. This line is missing in the Indian edition, but found in the Beijing edition, *mDo gzer mig*, Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1991, p.561.
75. *pa'i.*
76. *rtse.*
77. *gis.*



rgyus rnams kyang khyod nyid thugs la gsal/ dge ba bar du lus pa'i 'phro 'di ji ltar bgyis na 'grub/ nyid dang byis pa cho lo 'debs pa la sogs pa/ ji ltar lags pa'i bka' cig nges par bdag la bshad du gsol/

de la khye'u chung gis gsungs pa/ rgyal po rgya yi rigs rgya kong tse[78] 'phrul gyi rgyal pos zhus sam gsol ba ni/ shin tu yang legs so/ khyod dad pa dang dge ba la sems rtsal ci yod/ ngas nyams len byas pas/ khyod kyang dge la sbyor ba ni dad pa can cig snang/ da (97b) rung sems kyis bzod pa thang ma chod par 'dug/ yid chad 'khyams pas tshogs kyis nga dang 'phrad/ da ni ci bsam mtha' ru phyin par 'grub ste 'ong/ zhus pa nges par bshad na 'di ltar ro/ yul 'di'i ming ni/ la 'grems 'phrang ba'i rtse bya ba/ rgyal po bzhi'i ru mtshams yin no/ gdags la mi brgya lta ba 'di ni/ lha rgyal bar smon lam 'debs pa yin no/ srib la mi brgya ltar a 'di ni/ srin rgyal bar dmod mo 'bor ba yin no/ nged gsum las khye'u skyin gyi ral ga can/ gser gyi ral gri thogs pa 'di ni/ lha yid bzhin gyi smon lam skyes bya ba yin no/ khye'u ra yi slag[79] pa can lcags kyi sog le thogs pa 'di ni/ srin mya ngam gyi dmod pa skyes bya ba yin no/ khye'u dug po rtsi ber can shel gyi phreng ba bsnams[80] pa nga phyva[81] keng tse lan med bya ba yin no/ khong gnyis ni lha srin gyi rgyal pham gser gyi cho lo la rgya 'gre[82] byed pa yin no/ lha srin rgya 'gre byed pa'i gang pham gang rgyal dag dpang[83] po phyvas byed pa dang khyod 'phrad pas/ de ni shin du yang legs so//

78. *rtse.*
79. *slags.*
80. *bcugs.*
81. *phya.*
82. *'dra.*
83. *dbang.*

# Three Sacred Bon Dances (*'cham*)

The Bonpo Monastic Centre in India was founded in 1969 by the Abbot Lung-rtogs bstan-pa'i nyi-ma. He was born in 1929 in Shar-khog, Amdo, North-Eastern Tibet and was educated in the monastery of sKyang-tshang. In 1954, after having attained the degree of dGe-bshes, the 'Virtuous Companion', he was commissioned to go to Khro-skyabs in rGyal-rong by his teacher, bsTan-'dzin blo-gros rgya-mtsho (1889-1975) to obtain a full set of the printed edition of the Bonpo Canon for the monastery. On his return he was advised also by his teacher to do further studies in the monasteries of sMan-ri and g.Yung-drung-gling in Central Tibet. After this he also went to study in Drepung, near Lhasa. At the time of the uprising of the Tibetan people against the Chinese occupation of Tibet, he left Tibet for India where, together with the present author, he began to publish Tibetan books in 1960. He, Lopön Tenzin Namdak and the author were invited to the University of London by Professor D. L. Snellgrove in 1961. During his stay in England he developed strong interest in the Christian monastic system and so took the opportunity to study it besides his research work in the University. He visited many Christian monasteries in Britain and resided for long periods in the Catholic Centre in the Old Palace in Oxford, in Downside Abbey, Bath, in Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight, and in the monasteries of the Greek Orthodox Church on Mount Athos, Greece. Just before his return to India in 1964 he had an audience with the late Pope Paul in the Vatican in Rome.

In 1968, without his knowledge he was elected by lot as the 33rd abbot of the monastery of sMan-ri in India whilst he was engaged in research work in Oslo University. An enormous responsibility unexpectedly fell on his shoulders. He did not take on the challenge lightly. It was a question of reconstructing a traditional monastic culture developed during a millenium from its ruins in a foreign land.

After fourteen years of hard work, he has managed to create a totally self-sufficient monastery up to now with 120 monks, developing it into a thriving, active centre of all branches of Tibetan traditional learning.

The religious dances described in the following pages are, among others, reconstituted by him in 1970 at the Monastic Centre in India. No person perhaps is more qualified than he to re-establish such dances, for in his monastery in Amdo, he was responsible during six years for the annual dance. First, for three years, he was the *'cham mjug*, 'the one who is at the end of the line' and the *'cham dpon*, the 'chief of dance', for



another three years. The *'cham dpon* and the *'cham mjug* both have the responsibility of teaching and of disciplining the young dancers. When the dance is performed the *'cham dpon* himself leads the group by taking part in the dance at the head of the line, whereas the *'cham mjug* controls the others by bringing up the rear at the end of the line. The traditional *'cham* dance in Tibet was very widespread and often varied from one place to another. The following three are the most important among the many Bonpo sacred dances.

### I. Ma rgyud tshogs 'cham

This sacred religious dance called Ma rgyud tshogs 'cham, the 'dance of the *tshogs* of the Ma-rgyud cycle' forms a part of a complex Bonpo esoteric ritual which itself, like all other rituals of this type, is primarily conceived of as a means of attaining spiritual realization. The origin of the Black Hat *(zhva nag)* which is worn during this *'cham* is still quite unknown all though it is currently used by all the religious denominations of Tibet.

The dance is particularly connected with the cutting of the *tshogs* in the rite as indicated by its name. The *tshogs* is an offering to the tutelary divinities and literally means assembly. Its ingredients are parched barley flour (*rtsam pa*), butter, cheese, dried fruits and Tibetan brewed ale (*chang*).

The dance therefore was not conceived in the beginning as a public spectacle and was attended only by the adepts who were performing the ritual. It was thus a totally private ritual. However, from about the fifteenth century it gradually became more public and formed a part of the annual festival along with other traditional religious dances in the monasteries.

The texts of the ritual are drawn from the *Ma rgyud rgyud gsum.*[1] According to Bon history, these three principal texts were hidden in a cave at rTa-nag dung-phor in gTsang when the Bon religion was suffering persecution by the hand of the king Khri Srong-lde-bstan (742-797) in the eighth century A.D. Later in the twelfth century Guru rNon-rtse ( b.1136) revealed the texts and began to diffuse the teachings contained therein. They eventually came into the hands of the gShen family who were based at Dar-sding in gTsang. This ancient family was reputed to be in direct line from gShen-rab Mi-bo, the founder of the religion. It is said that Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan (b.1360)[2] of this family organized the dance and made it public. The chant, music and the dance of the Ma-rgyud cycle represent a particular tradition among the Bonpo, developed by the gShen family,

1. Karmay, 1977, No.21.
2. On this master, see *LShDz* (Karmay, 1972: 143).

known as *gshen lugs*, the system of the gShen family.

The choreography of this dance is in three parts, indicated by A, B and C. It includes words chanted mentally by both musicians and dancers. An English rendering is given except in the case of *mantra*. Each of the three parts is repeated three times in the dance.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A. | *Tshogs rnga chen mo* | *The great drum of the tshogs* |
| | *bde lags su/* | How joyous! |
| | o o o | |
| | *he ye shes khro tshogs/* | He! The host of all wrathful Divinities. |
| | O O O O O | |
| | *tshogs la byon cig/* | Come to have the *tshogs*. |
| | O o o o | |
| | *dbal mo ma tshogs/* | The host of the *dbal mo* mothers, |
| | O O O O | |
| | *tshogs la dgongs shig/* | Attention to the *tshogs*. |
| | O o o o | |
| | *ja hum ja hum/* | |
| | O o O o | |
| | *sarva puja/* | |
| | O o o o | |
| | *heru heru/* | |
| | O o O o | |
| | *byams brtse'i zhal khar/* | To the loving mouth. |
| | O o o o | |
| | *gdang ba'i dbyings su/* | Into the sphere of the opening, |
| | O O O O | |
| | *snang srid bsgral ba'i/* | The delivered world, |
| | O o o o | |
| | *tshogs mchod 'bul lo/* | Is offered as the *tshogs*. |
| | O O O O | |
| | *shar trum bhu dha'i/* | |
| | O o o o | |
| | *pu tse pu tse/* | |
| | O o O o | |
| | *sha trum bhu dha'i/* | |
| | O o o o | |
| | *pu tse pu tse/* | |
| | O o O o | |



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *khyung ltar lding bas/* | Hovering like an eagle, |
| | O o o o | |
| | *byin rlabs nas/* | Empowering the *tshogs*, |
| | O O O | |
| | *seng ltar mchong bas/* | Jumping like a lion, |
| | O o o o | |
| | *da sgrol cig/* | Cut it now. |
| | O O O | |
| | *stag ltar rngam pas/* | Raging like a tiger, |
| | O o o o | |
| | *kha ram kha hi/* | Partake of it. |
| | O o o o | |
| | *rngam brjid drag pos/* | Splendidly ferocious |
| | O o o o | |
| | *mngon spyod kyis/* | and manifesting wrathfully. |
| | O O o | |
| | *phrin las kun/* | All that is to be done, |
| | O O o | |
| | *ding 'dir sgrub cig/* | Let it be achieved today! |
| | O o O o | |
| | *dbyings kyi lha mchog/* | Excellent divinities in heaven, |
| | O o O O | |
| | *mkha' la skur bzhengs/* | Rise in the celestial sphere. |
| | o o o o | |
| | *klong du las bzhi'i/* | In the mental sphere, the four kinds of actions, |
| | O O O O | |
| | *phrin las mdzod cig/* | Perform them! |
| | o o o o | |
| | E ma ho/ | Emaho! |
| | O O o | |
| | *bder gshegs rnams kyis/* | Let the ones who have gone into happiness, |
| | O O O o | |
| | *bag chags byang bar mdzod/* | purify our bad imprints. |
| | O O O o O | |
| B. | *Srid rgyal drug rgyag* | *The sixfold striking of the drum of Srid-rgyal.* |
| | o o o | *bde lags su/* How joyous! |

*dbyings kyi lha mchog/*
o o o o
*klong du las bzhi'i/*
O O O O
*phrin las mdzod cig/* — (For translation of these lines, see lines 27-30).
o o o o
*pu tse pu tse/*
O o O o

*zhi khro 'bar ba'i/* — The blazingly tranquil and wrathful
O O O O
*lha tshogs/* — Host of divinities.
O O
*dam can dbal mo/* — The oath-bound dBal-mo.
O O O O
*ma tshogs/* — The bost of mothers,
O O
*bon skyong srung ma/* — The protectors of Bon,
O O O O

*rnams kyis/* — All of you,
O O
*sman rag gtor tshogs/* — The medicine, the *rakta* and the *gtor ma,*
o o o o
*bzhes nas/* — Having consumed them all,
o o
*mchog dang thun mong/* — The superior and the ordinary,
o o o o
*dngos grub/* — Give the attainment,
o o

*ding 'dir bdag la/* — Today to us,
o o o o
*stsol cig/* — We beseech!
o o

C. gTor rnga chen mo — *The great drum of the gtorma*

*bde legs su/* — How joyous!
o o o
*dbyings kyi lha mchog/*
O O O O
*mkha' la skur bzhengs/*
o o o o



*klong du las bzhi'i/*
O O O O
*phrin las mdzod cig/* — (for translation of these lines see lines Nos. 27-30)
o o o o
*kye/* — Kye!
O
*zhi khro'i lha/* — The tranquil and wrathful divinities.
O O O
*dbal mo tshogs/* — The host of the dBal-mo.
O O O

*bon skyong rnams/* — All the protectors of Bon,
O O O
*sman rag dbal gtor bzhes/* — Drink the medicine and the *rakta.* Partake of the *dbal gtor.*
O o o o o



*Plate 16: A Black Hat 'cham, Dolanji, HP, India (SGK 1983)*

## II. gZe ma dgu 'cham

According to Bon cosmogony, the world came into existence from a cosmic egg and so many of the beings, including the nine sisters represented in the dance, are also born from eggs. The theory of the cosmic egg is ancient origin and, in Tibet, specific to the Bon religion.

In the same cosmogony, the god Srid-pa Sangs-po 'bum-khri, the father of the world and the goddess Chu-lcam rgyal-mo[3] are described as the ultimate ancestors of man. The goddess Chu-lcam plays a very important part in the Bonpo pantheon. Behind this matriarchally structured pantheon, unlike the imported Tibetan Buddhist culture, lies a rich indigenous mythology, founded on autochtonic beliefs.

Under various names and functions, in tranquil and wrathful aspects, the goddess Chu-lcam has the dominant position in Bonpo esoteric and in popular rituals. It is she who presides over the cosmic order of the universe. However, her favourite role is to be, under various names, the female partner of esoteric divinities. When she takes on the function of religious protrectress she is called Srid-pa rgyal-mo, the queen of the world.[4]

It is said that at one time she became a partner of the divinity lHa-rgod thog-pa in heaven. The couple produced twenty-seven eggs. From each of the first nine eggs, the nine sisters of the gZe-ma with human bodies and animal heads were born. They were appointed as religious protectresses by the sage sTag-la me-'bar. From each of the next nine coloured eggs, again nine goddesses with animal heads were produced. They too became religious protectresses. However, eight of the last nine eggs were made from different kinds of precious metal and the last one, the 9th (or the 27th) was a stone egg. Those of precious metal were given as presents to various cosmic gods residing in different quarters of the universe. The goddesses who came out of these eggs, unlike their elder sisters, were beautiful and they became chiefs of all sorts of goddesses in the universe. The parents of all these goddesses, however, could not find a suitable recipient for the stone egg. So they threw it towards the north-east. It landed in the hands of the king of demons. The latter said, "Oh! A stone egg! Where do you come from?" A sound from inside the egg replied. "I am the daughter of Srid-pa rgyal-mo. If you will help to let me out I will serve you with my body and speech." The king of the demons said, "There is nothing that Srid-pa rgyal-mo would not do. She has too many children by different consorts!" He broke the egg and a woman with dark red complexion and iron hair appeared. She became the queen of demons.

The present dance presents only the first nine of the twenty-seven sisters, called gZe-ma-dgu, wearing masks of nine different animals, but in the monasteries of Tibet, all twenty-seven were often included in the dance led by their mother. Every part of the dance was first performed by the mother while her daughters looked on as if she were teaching them

3. On this couple, see Article No.8, pp. 127-28.
4. *Cf.* Article No. 8, p. 137.



how to dance, and then they all performed each part of the dance together.

The iconographic descriptions, functions and the narration of the story are to be found in the text entitled *Khro bo dbang chen* [5] believed to have been rediscovered by gShen-chen Klu-dga' (996-1035) of the gShen family in 1017. The goddess Srid-pa rgyal-mo was the favourite religious protectress of this family, and according to tradition, it was this master who instituted the sacred dance.

**The nine sisters of *gZe ma* are:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | sNgon-mo 'brug-mgo, | the blue dragon holding a *makara*'s foot. |
| 2. | lJang-nag sbrul-mgo, | the dark green snake holding a *khyung* eagle's wing. |
| 3. | Nag-mo skyung-mgo, | the black chough holding a red claw. |
| 4. | dKar-mo seng-mgo, | the white lioness holding a red noose |
| 5. | dMar-mo dred-mgo, | the red *dre* (Tibetan brown bear) holding a lock of iron hair. |
| 6. | dMar-nag spyang-mgo, | the dark red wolf holding a hawk's wing. |
| 7. | sMug-nag stag-mgo, | the dark brown tiger holding the skin of a *dre*. |
| 8. | Ser-ljang khyung-mgo, | the yellow green *khyung* eagle holding a boy and a girl. |
| 9. | Klu-mo kha-rngam, | the *makara* holding a fan. |

The choreography of this dance consists of fifteen movements. Each is simply named without any description.

1. *lam 'dren*, the guide (i.e. the dance used for entering the arena).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2. | *stag 'gros*, | tiger steps. |
| 3. | *seng stabs*, | lion leaps. |
| 4. | *zhi drag*, | the tranquil and the wrathful. |
| 5. | *me ri*, | the fire mountain. |
| 6. | *ma brgyud*, | the lineage of the mother. |
| 7. | *rngam 'gyu*, | the splendid movement. |
| 8. | *chags phebs*, | the welcoming. |
| 9. | *glog 'gyu*, | the lightning movement. |
| 10. | *mda' then*, | the drawing of the arrow. |
| 11. | *gnam 'dul*, | the disciplining of heaven. |
| 12. | *sa 'dul*, | the disciplining of earth. |
| 13. | *bzhi rgyag*, | the four drum beats. |
| 14. | Srid pa rgyal-mo, | the queen of the world. |
| 15. | *bla ma bon skor*, | the Bon lama circuit. |

5. Karmay, 1977, No. 28, 13-19.

## III. gShen rab g.yung drung dgu 'cham

This masked dance presents nine different Bonpo religious protectors, led by their chief, the goddess Srid-pa rgyal-mo in her wrathful aspects. The host is of various origins and its members belong to different periods of history.

However, the present form of the dance goes back to the fifteenth century. It was first revealed by mNyam-med Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan (1356-1415)[6] who founded the monastery of sMan-ri in 1405, the principal religious centre of the Bonpo from the fifteenth century upto 1959 in which year it was abandoned. It was finally destroyed during the Chinese Cultural Revolution in the 1960s.

It is said that the master Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan was in retreat in the *sgrub khang*, the chief sanctuary for the propitiation of divinities in the monastery. One night when he was in a state of deep meditation he perceived that all the religious protectors, nine in all, in their full iconographic regalia, were performing a beautiful dance with music around the *dkyil 'khor,* a miniature construction of a temple representing the celestial residence of the divinities. Later he revealed his vision to his disciples and so the dance was then instituted in the monastery. It was performed once a year on the 29th of the 12th month of the year when other dances were also performed in public.

The Bon religious protectors are originally spirits and are believed to have been subdued by the early sages in order that they should take the oath of protecting the Bon religion and to look after its adepts. They represent several different types of spirits residing in various spheres of the universe. The nine in this dance are:-

1. Sridpa rgyal-mo, chief of the group.
2. dMu-bdud, chief of demons.
3. bTsan, chief of the *btsan* spirits.
4. A-bse rgyal-ba, another chief of the *btsan* spirits.
5. Nyi-pang-sad, a king of Zhang-zhung origin.
6. 'Dzam-sngon, the blue Jambhala.
7. Shel-khrab-can, possibly a version of the king Pe-har [7]
8. Grags-pa seng-ge, a deified Buddhist lama.[8]
9. sTa-rgo, a mountain deity.

The following choreographical directions are a short version of a detailed text. Each part, numbered from one to nine, is repeated three times in the dance.

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6. On his life see *LShDz* (Karmay 1972: 141-45); Kvaerne, 1995: 135.
7. *Cf.* Article No. 20, pp. 354-64.
8. *Cf.* Article No. 8, pp. 138-39.



### The Translation of the Tibetan Text

While the invocation for inviting the excellent mother, the Queen of the World, is being chanted, the *'cham dpon* alone performs the swastika sequence, dancing in a chain pattern to form a swastika.

Making their entry into the arena the dancers take tiger steps and lion leaps. (Then the main dance begins):

1. Begins with one beat of the music, lifting the left-hand.
2. Begins with two beats, extending the right-hand and drawing in the left.
3. Begins with two beats, throwing out the right-hand and then the left.
4. Begins with three beats, drawing out the sword.
5. Begins with three beats, drawing the arrow.
6. Begins with four beats, extending the right-hand and drawing in the left.
7. Begins with four beats making a low lotus flower circle.
8. Begins with five beats, making a high lotus flower circle.
9. Begins with six beats, extending both hands from the chest.

### The Tibetan Text

*ma mchog srid pa rgyal mo spyan 'dren pa'i ring la 'cham dpon gyis g.yung drung lu gu rgyud thengs gsum 'khyil zin mtshams nas/*
*stag 'gros/*
*seng stabs/*
*gcig gcig nas bskyed/ g.yon bkyag/*
*gnyis gnyis nas bskyed/ g.yas brkyang g.yon bskum/*
*gsum gnyis nas bskyed/ g.yas 'phang g.yon 'phang/*
*bzhi gsum nas bskyed/ gri then/*
*lnga gsum nas bskyed/ mda' then/*
*drug bzhi nas bskyed/ g.yas brkyang g.yon bskum/*
*bdun bzhi nas bskyed/ pad skor dma' ba/*
*brgyad lnga nas bskyed/ pad skor mtho ba/*
*dgu drug nas bskyed/ brang shad/*

While on a research mission in India under the auspices of the Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, I was asked at a very short notice by the Abbot, Lung-rtogs bstan-pa'i nyi-ma and Krystyna Cech of Oxford University to write this article in conjunction with the European tour of the Bonpo *'cham* dance troop which takes place in November 1983.

I acknowledge the assistance of the Abbot especially concerning the choreographical sections.

Bonpo Monastic Centre,
October, 1983.

# The Organisation of Domestic Space

Tibetan texts on the organisation of space are rare, especially where lay habitats are concerned. During my research mission under the auspices of the CNRS in India, September-October 1983, my colleague Lopön Tenzin Namdak reminded me of a passage on 'ordinary house building' in the *g.Yung drung las rnam par dag pa'i rgyud,* a text consisting of 210 folios divided into 20 chapters, generally devoted to Bonpo teachings.[1]

The copy of the text I consulted is published and is a reproduction of a manuscript from Dolpo in north-western Nepal. It does not, however, indicate the date of its publication. The Bonpo monastery in Dolanji, Himachal Pradesh, is currently preparing another publication based on a xylographic edition from Khro-chen in Gyalrong (south-eastern Tibet).

This work is considered very important by the Bonpo and for this reason is placed at the beginning of their Canon.[2] It is considered to be a *gter ma*, in other words, a text concealed during the royal period (seventh-ninth centuries) to be later 'rediscovered' by a predestined *gter ston* (a 'text-discoverer'). In the present case, the *gter ston* is Gyer-mi Nyi-'od. According to the colophon, after the *gter ston* discovered the text, he transmitted it to rMa-ston Srid-'dzin (b.1092 according to Bonpo chronology).[3] Thanks to A.M. Blondeau's studies, rMa-ston, who played an important part in the founding of the eclectic tradition, is better known to us.[4]

The passage on the organisation of domestic space is found in chapter ten where it refers not to an 'ordinary house', but to a 'priest's palace' (*gshen gyi pho brang*), i.e. a person of a high social rank.

This passage reflects a certain conception of Tibetan architecture. Spatial organisation is defined by two events: the shooting of an arrow to determine the length of one side of the building, and the planting of four main pickets to mark the cardinal directions. This procedure reflects an ancient practice that was used for the foundation of bSam-yas in the eighth century, the first Tibetan monastery. According to one version of *BZh,* an historical work, the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan (r. 755-797) shot an arrow to delimit the area and to trace the surrounding wall of the

1. Bonpo Monastic Centre, Dolanji, Himachal Pradesh.
2. Kvaerne, 1974.
3. F.210a,4. *Cf.* Karmay, 1972: 156-60, 167-68.
4. Blondeau, 1982-83.



monastery.[5] The four '*stūpa* pickets' were supposedly planted in order to supress the demons.[6] But it seems that these four pickets were initially planted to mark the four directions, since the four *stūpa* were apparently erected where the pickets had been planted only after the construction of the monastery was completed.[7] The four *stūpa* were destroyed and most of the buildings were plundered by the Chinese during the Cultural Revolution.

Spatial organisation is based on the cosmic directions as well as on certain beliefs. On the one hand, certain entrances are oriented towards the direction of certain deities, such as the earth deity in the south-westerly direction; on the other hand, the plan is conceived as a *maṇḍala.* This explains why houses are always built according to a square plan. In certain regions of Tibet, houses are still built according to the plan and orientations described in this text.

It is well known that most Tibetan houses are built with three levels, especially in Eastern Tibet, a characteristic which distinguishes them from houses in neighbouring countries. The ground floor shelters the cattle, the first floor the family and the last floor is used for storing straw and hay.

In this text, however, man dwells on the ground floor. This is also true of certain houses in Central and Southern Tibet and perhaps provides some indication of the text's geographical origin. The chapel is situated on the south-west side and the kitchen on the west side. Moreover, the chapel which is described in detail, is separate from the main house and built on one level. It contains twenty-nine pillars, the only indication concerning the palace's dimension.

**Translation of the Tibetan Text**

In a suitable and auspicious place,
A faithful priest
Determines a favourable date (for the construction of the house).
A strong man shoots an arrow with his bow[8]
to find the length of one side.
A picket is planted at each of the four corners
to determine without error the four intermediate points.
Then a circle is drawn around them as a symbol of the four compassions (Fig.a).
From each intermediate point a line is drawn towards the centre (Fig.b).

5. *KhG*, p.46 (f.91a, 6).
6. *Ibid.*, p.46 (f.91a, 6).
7. *Ibid.*, p.48 (f.96b, 4); *cf.* Stein, 1961, p.42, ll.2-10.
8. In the language of Zhang-zhung, *ver* means arrow and *hrum* bow, *cf.* Haarh, 1968.

Four pickets are planted to determine without error the cardinal points.
These are the measurements for the *gshen* palace.
Around this site as defined,
a line is drawn between the cardinal points and the four intermediate points (Fig.c).
Then each side is divided into three sections.
Four lines are traced (i.e. two horizontal and two vertical), forming nine sections (Fig.d).
No lines are drawn
within the east, north-east and south-west sections.
But a line from west to east is traced
in the north and north-west (sections) dividing them in two (Fig.e).
The north section shelters
the plough, the millstone and the fuel.
The entrance is oriented towards the south.
In this way merit will be accumulated.
The northern part of the north-west section
is the granary.
The entrance should be oriented towards the south-east,
in order receive the essence of brTan-ma, the earth goddess.
The western half of the north-west section
is the kitchen.
The door opens towards the east from the west
so as to receive the benefits of the light.
The southern half of the west section
is the treasury of the *gshen*.
The door opens towards the north from the south
so that the daughter of the *gnod sbyin* mDog-bzang-ma,
may bestow the power of wealth.
In the south-west section,
the chapel g.Yung-drung bkod-legs should be built to prevent the demons from entering.
The chapel must face east,
to receive light from both the sun and moon, sons of gods.
The eastern third of the southern section should be set aside.
The two other thirds to the west
are reserved for the chapel hall where the monks practise their virtuous actions.
The eastern third serves as the entrance to the *gshen* palace and the entrance should face south.
The two southern thirds of the south-east section are reserved
for the guests and those who depend (on the family).
The entrance faces west.
In this way, benevolence will give access to this section.
The eastern section and one third of the south-eastern section form one part.



This is the great hall,where the ustensils are kept.
The door opens towards the west from the south-east,
so as to behold the path that leads to the Eternal One.
The north-east section is the lay assembly hall...
It has two entrances, one facing south and the other facing west.
The central part of the house is reserved for domestic animals (Fig. f).

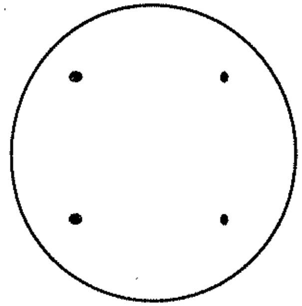


*Fig. a*

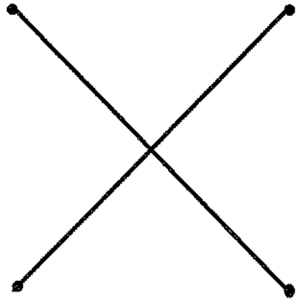


*Fig. b*

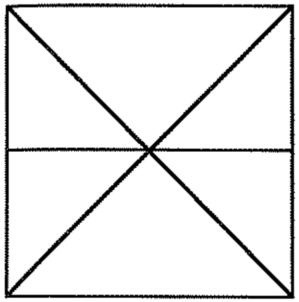


*Fig. c*

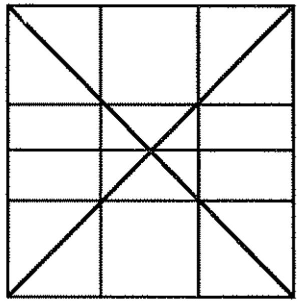


*Fig. d*

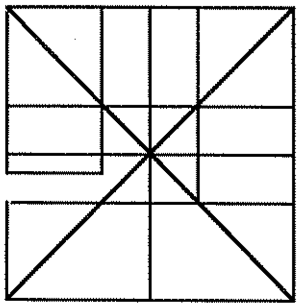


*Fig. e*

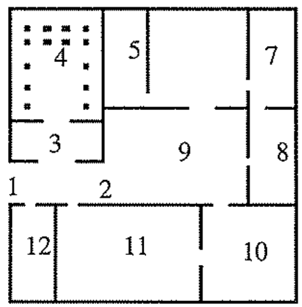



*Fig. f*

1 Entrance; 2 doorwy; 3 chapel hall; 4 chapel for monks; 5 reasury; 6 kitchen; 7 granary; 8 place for firewood, plough, millstone; 9 stock-yard, stable; 10 lay assembly hall; 11 reception room; 12 guestroom.

**The Tibetan Text**

(f.66a,5) mtshan (66b,1) ldan bkra shis sa gnas su/
dad 'dun ldan pa'i gshen rab kyis/
phun sum 'tshogs (tshogs) pa'i dus bzung la/
ver hrim gyad kyi shugs tshad la/
ngos cig phyogs kyi chang bzung nas/
phyogs mtshams ma nor phur bzhi gdab/
thugs rje bzhi ldan mu khyud bkod/
de yi phyogs shig bzhi can ni/
zur nas nang du bod (dgod) par bya/
phyogs mtshams ma nor phur bzhi gdab/
gshen rab pho brang gzhal yas tshad/
de ltar bkod pa'i sa skor la/
phyogs mtshams thig bzhi gdab par bya/
de nas phyogs rer gsum gsum bgos/
thig bzhi gdab nas ling tse dgu/
shar dang byang shar lho nub gsum/
gshag thig mi gdab sor bzhag la/
byang dang (67a,1) byang nub phyed ma ru/
nub dang shar du thig gdab gshag/
byang phyogs byang gi gling skor na/
shing lcags ran dang zhugs shing mdzod/
de yi mdzod sgo lho ru bstan/
bsod nams tshogs rnams rdzogs par 'gyur/
byang nub gling gi byang phyogs cha/
gshen gyi spyad rkyen 'bru bcud mdzod/
mdzod sgo lho shar lhor ru bstan/
lha mo brtan mas bcud ster 'gyur/
byang nub nub kyi phyed cha bsdom/
gshen rab khrims sde g.yo (g.yos) spyod mdzod/
mdzod sgo nub nas shar du lta (blta)/
gsal ba'i mdangs kyis byin phebs 'gyur/
nub kyi phyed cha lho yi gling/
gshen gyi rin chen gter gyi mdzod/
mdzod sgo lho nas byang du bstan/
gnod sbyin bo (bu) mo mdog 67b,1) bzang mas/
rin chen gter gyi dngos grub ster/
lho nub mtshams kyi gling skor la/
rag sha srin po('i) sgo bcad phyir/
g.yung drung bkod legs gsas mkhar bzhengs/....(69a3)
lha yi gzhal yas shar du lta (blta)/...
lha sras nyi zlas mdangs ster 'gyur/
(69a,3) de nas lho yi gling skor gyi/



sum cha shar du bcad par bya/
sum gnyis nub tu lus pa la/
smad khyams tshangs pa'i dge spyod sar (sa)/
sum cha shar du bcad pa ni/
gshen gyi pho brang sgo lhor bltas (blta)/(69a,4)
lho shar gling gi sum gnyis ni/
lho yi phyogs su bkod pa ni/
gnas med skyabs dang rten gnas te/
sgo ni mtshams nas nub tu bstan/
thugs rje stobs kyis gnas (69b,1) bzang thob/
shar dang lho shar sum cha bsres/
gshen gyi pho brang phyi khyams ste/
gshen rab bon gyi ka rtsa (ca) ste/
phyi khyams de yi sgo phyogs kyang/
lho nub mtshams nas nub tu bstan/
g.yung drung sems dpa'i lam mthong 'gyur/
byang shar khyim pa'i sgrub tshogs sar....(69,4)
sgo gnyis lho dang nub tu blta/
dbus dang byang gi phyed cha ni/
rta dang khyu mchog rkang 'gros mdzod/

# Two Eighteenth Century Xylographic Editions of the *gZi brjid*

It is with great respect that I dedicate this article to Professor Snellgrove. He is one of the first western scholars to have undertaken the study of Bon as a religion. His book on the subject has become a classic in Tibetan studies.[1] It contains a translation of important parts of *ZJ*, the longest version of the life-story of the master gShen-rab Mi-bo. *ZJ* is in fact an expanded version of the medium length version of *ZM*.[2] There was also a short version bearing the title *mDo 'dus*[3] quoted in various works, but the text itself has never been available outside Tibet and some scholars have even wondered whether it existed at all. Before I take up the discussion of the xylographic editions of *ZJ*, let me mention briefly how I came to recover a copy of the *mDo 'dus* recently.

In 1985, during a research mission in Amdo under the auspice of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, I came across what appeared to be an inventory entitled *dKar mdzes khul du yod pa'i bod yig par shing rig rdzas*, 'Inventory of the Tibetan woodblocks in the region of dKar-mdzes', made by a special committee (*Bod yig par shing rig rdzas sdud sgrig tshogs chung*) headed by a person named sKal-bzang. It is a recent work surveying woodblocks and manuscripts which survived the ravages of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. This inventory, which is no doubt intended to be published, contains lists of texts existing either on woodblocks or in manuscripts in thirty-seven monasteries in the dKar-mdzes region in Khams. Each title-entry is marked with words *sngon yod*, 'formerly existed' and *da yod*, 'existing now' together with the number of folios showing whether the woodblocks and manuscripts in question are complete or not.

Under the name of the Bonpo monastery, dBal-khyung-dgon, in Nyag-rong, the place of the *gter ston* gSang-sngags gling-pa (b.1864), the inventory gives a complete list of a set of manuscripts of the whole Bonpo Canon. The printing of a new photoset edition to be based on this manuscript copy of the entire Bonpo Canon was under way in Chengdu in 1985.

It was this inventory which gave the title *'Dus pa rin-po che'i rgyud sangs rgyas rnam thar* and I realised that it was *mDo 'dus*. I therefore eventually obtained a copy of the printed edition based on the above mentioned manuscript of the dBal-khyung monastery. It is in *dbu med* and bears the title: *lHa'i bon mdo 'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud* and has

1. Snellgrove, 1967.
2. Kværne, 1974: K6; Karmay, 1977: No.4.
3. Kværne, 1974: K7; On the three versions, *cf*, also Karmay, 1972 : 4, n. 1.



twenty-four chapters as stated by Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin,[4] in 105 folia (la-105a).

Whether the other two versions of the life-story are developed from the *mDo 'dus* or *vice-versa* remains to be seen. However, judging from the rather archaic literary composition and certain themes concerning gShen-rab's life-story retold in a down-to-earth manner, this text might well be the oldest version.

Professor Snellgrove's translation of the excerpts from *ZJ* is based on a manuscript borrowed by the Abbot Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin in 1961 from the monastery of bSam-gling[5] in Dolpo. This same manuscript was later reproduced and published in twelve volumes by the Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, Dolanji, in 1983. Although manuscript copies of *ZJ* were fairly common in pre-communist Tibet, xylographic editions were rare indeed. In fact, there were only two different editions, both originating in rGyal-rong, but the printing blocks now no longer exist due to the havoc caused by the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. During my stay in Amdo in 1985 I came across only one copy of the two editions of which some examples are reproduced here.

rGyal-rong was a stronghold of the Bon religion. Traditionally it boasted eighteen principalities. Amongst them, bTsan-la, Khro-skyabs and Rab-brtan were very famous for their bravery against the Mongols in the early centuries and later their resistance against the Manchu encroachment in the latter half of the eighteenth century.[6] The kings of Khro-skyabs and Rab-brtan principalities were particularly active in promoting what they consider as their faith, the Bon religion. It is under their patronages that a large number of woodblocks were carved for printing texts as well as figures illustrating the life-story of gShen-rab Mi-bo consisting of thirty-two blocks in the mid-eighteenth century.

In all this religious activity, the Bonpo master, Kun-grol-grags-pa (b. 1700), still active in 1766, played a key role having been the royal prelate in both palaces of Khro-skyabs and Rab-brtan. He himself was born in Khams in a family known as sMon-rgyal, but he flourished particularly in rGyal-rong in his later years. It was at the behest of the above mentioned kings that he compiled his esteemed catalogue[7] of the Bonpo Canon in 1751 in the palace of Rab-brtan, called Li-ver rnam-par rgyal-ba'i rdzong.

Below are excerpts from the editorial colophons (*par byang*) of the xylographic editions of *ZJ* which are found at the end of the volume A. It is the twelfth and last of both editions. In these colophons mention is made of the names of the kings under whose order the carving of the blocks was undertaken, the names of scholars involved in the editorial

4. Kværne, 1974: K7.
5. On this monastery, see Karmay, 1977: ii-iv.
6. *Cf.* Article No. 3.
7. Now published under the title: *g.Yung drung bon gyi bka' 'gyur dkar chag*, Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, Beijing 1993.

work and the dates at which the carving was initiated and completed.

1. **The editorial colophon of the xylographic edition of *ZJ* from Khro-skyabs.**
"....... The emanation Blo-ldan snying-po *alias* Pad-'byung rnam-mkha' rin-chen (b.1360) heard (the text of *ZJ*) from the great sTangs.[8] He then wrote it down on paper filling volumes and so it contributed to the removing of darkness from Tibet. The teaching contained in *ZJ* was then transmitted through an uninterrupted line of teachers, eventually reaching the most gracious master Rig-'dzin Kun-grol grags-pa and Nang-so Nam-mkha' dbang-ldan of Khro-khyung.
When the good king of Khro-chen, Kun-dga' nor-bu who possessed the four kinds of boon[9] and who excelled in rendering his people happy and his esteemed nephew bSod-nams yid-bzhin dbang-rgyal, in order to serve most effectively the teachings of gShen-rab, had the printing blocks of *ZJ* made, the master *rgyal dbang* Kun-grol grags-pa made a survey of the whole text paying attention to the problem of its new and old vocabulary and its literary composition. The *nang so* Nam-mkha' dbang-ldan g.yung-drung have also checked through some of the volumes. I, the humble one, sMon-rgyal Sangs-rgyas rin-chen dpal-bzang, Shes-rab g.yung-drung who is the Lama of rGyal-nag and dBon-po g.Yung-drung rgyal-mtshan of mDa'-mdo, we three began (to edit the text) properly at the beginning of the 5th month of the year water-monkey (1752) and completed the editing at the beginning of the 2nd month of the year wood-bird (1765).[10]

2. **The editorial colophon of the xylographic edition of *ZJ* from Rab-brtan.**
".... When the king Mu-la ver-ro (Nam-mkha' rgyal-po),[11] who possesses the four kinds of boon .. had the woodblocks carved for printing, the editorial work concerning the new and old vocabulary and its literary composition was based on the Khro-skyabs print which was edited by Sangs-rgyas rin-chen dpal-bzang of the sMon-rgyal clan. The carving began on the 8th day of the 8th month when the planet Jupiter was in harmony with the constellation *rgyal* in the year *mi zad* (1766) and completed on the 12th day of the 6th month when the planet Mercury was in harmony with the constellation *lha mtshams* in the year *thams cad 'dul* (1767)."[12]



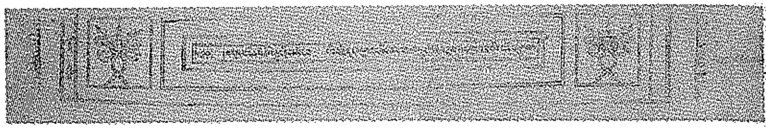
*Plate 17: Kum-grol grags-pa*

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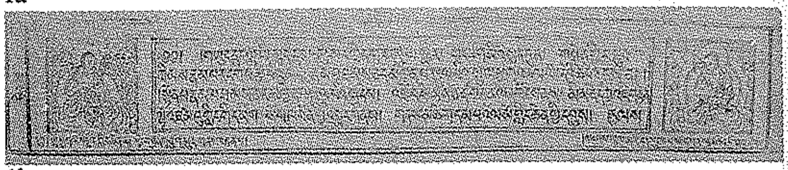
8. A Bonpo sage whose full name is sTangs-chen dMu-tsha gyer-med.
9. The four are: *chos*, religion; *nor*, wealth; *'dod yon*, pleasure; and *thar pa*, salvation.
10. Vol. A, f. 327b, 6... *brgyud pa'i zam ma chad par drin can gyi bla ma rig 'dzin kun grol (328a) grags pa dang/ khro khyung nang so nam mkha' dbang ldan gnyis la babs pa dag/ sde bzhi'i dpung phun tshogs 'chang ba mi dbang khro chen rgyal po 'gro kun dga' bde'i dpal ster mkhas nor bu dam pa dang bstan 'gro'i bsod nams las grub pa yid bzhin dbang rgyal khu dbon zung gis/ rgyal bstan bla nas bla ru bteg pa.../ par yig tu bkod pa'i tshe na gsar mying gi brda dang tshig don gyi cha/ 'go jug kun tu rnam 'dren dam pa rgyal dbang kun grol grags pa rin po ches tho tsam gzigs pa'i bka' drin byung zhing/ khro khyung nang so nam mkha' dbang ldan rin po che dang/ dge bshes mkhas grub lha dbang g.yung drung gnyis nas kyang dum pa re zung re gzigs shing/ zhib par phran bu smon rgyal sangs rgyas rin chen dpal bzang dang/ rgyal nag bla ma shes rab g.yung drung/ mda' mdo dbon po g.yung drung rgyal mtshan gsum gyis chu sprel zla ba lnga pa'i tshes bzang por dbu bzung nas/ shing bya zla ba gnyis pa'i tshes dge bar mthar grub cing/...*
11. For this king, see Article No. 3.
12. Vol. A, f. 207b, 3... *sprul ba'i sku mchog blo ldan snying po'am pad 'byung nam mkha' rin chen gyi snyan du stangs chen pos brgyud cing/ des bka' dang shog gi glegs bam du gtan la phab(s) pas bod yul mun gsal (bsal) zhing/ brgyud pa'i zom (zam) ma chad par drin can gyi bla ma rig 'dzin kun grol grags pa la babs pa dag/ sde bzhi'i dpung gya nom 'chang ba mi dbang rab rgyal mu la ver ro mtshan can gyis/ ... par yig tu bkod pa'i tshe na gsar mying gi brda dang tshig don gyi cha rnams/ 'go 'jug kun tu smon rgyal gyi gdung rigs dbon po sangs rgyas rin chen dpal bzang gis mdzad pa'i par ma la bu bshus byas pa'i/ mi zad lo khyu mchog zla ba'i yar tshes brgyad la lha bla ma rgyal gyi khrir 'gying nyin dbu bzung nas/ thams cad 'dul gyi lo nyi 'od ldan zla ba'i yar tshes bcu gnyis lhag pa lha mtshams 'phrod nyin dge bar grub cing*



*Plate 18: King of Khro-chen, Kun-dga' nor-bu*

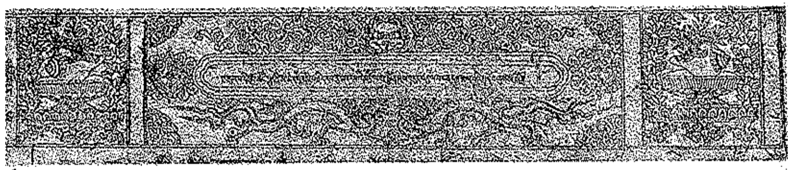


1a

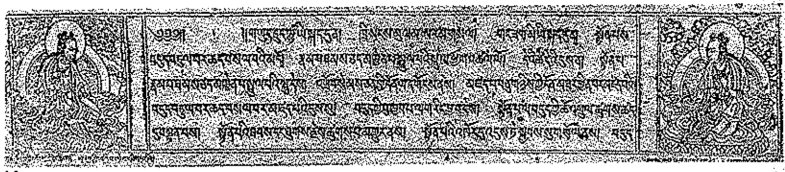


1b

*Plate 19: Examples of the Khro-chen edition of gZi brjid*



1a



1b

*Plate 20: Examples of the Rab-brtan edition of gZi brjid*
*Plates 17-20: Bya-'phur-tshang, rNga-khog, Amdo (SGK 1985)*



# Mount Bon-ri and its Association with Early Myths

One of the mountains considered most holy in Tibet is Bon-ri. It is to be found in the fertile region known as Kong-po (rKong-po), rich in agriculture and forest land. This province, about 400 kilometers to the east of Lhasa, is now accessible by bus.

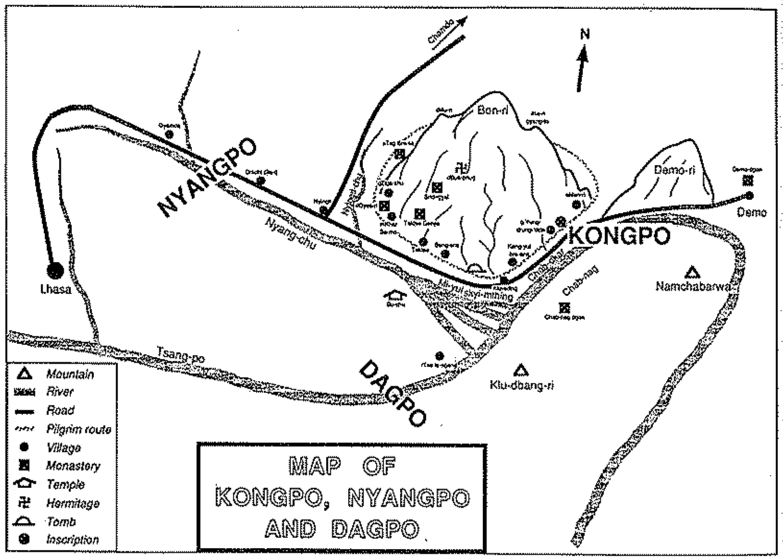
However, the sinification of the regions in Central Tibet has reached such an extent that when in 1987 I tried to buy a bus ticket in Lhasa, Kong-po did not seem to exist any more! It appeared that nobody in the Ticket Office knew where it could be. It was only after a while that I found out that the name of my destination was Ba-i, Eight-one, i.e. August 1st! When the People's Liberation Army arrived in what was formerly known as Brag-phyi in Kong-po from Khams on August 1st in 1950, it halted there for a while before marching on to Lhasa. Since then the place is called Ba-i, now a gigantic Chinese settlement of mostly PLA men and their families. Due to the region's proximity to the southern frontiers with India, Kong-po has become an ultra sensitive area. Consequently my personal endeavour to reach it did not look too promising since I held a foreign passport. I therefore requested the Academy of Social Sciences in Lhasa, where I was a guest, to intervene in the matter on my behalf. The Lhasa authorities were finally convinced that I was after all quite harmless, but they advised the Academy to send a member of its personnel to assist me, a proposal which I gladly accepted. The final choice for my assistant was Dondup Lhagyal. Once we were in Kong-po nobody ever asked us who we were.

Dondup was born in a Bonpo family in A-brag rdza-dmar in the vicinity of Nag-chu-kha. He was schooled there and later selected to go to the Central Institute of Nationalities in Peking with 29 other students from Central Tibet. In 1986, after completing his studies in Tibetan and Chinese literature, he returned to Tibet with his colleagues. Lhagpa Phuntsog, the President of the Academy, decided to keep him in the Academy, in its religious section, together with all his fellow students who were assigned to other sections, 23 boys and 6 girls aged between 22 and 28, to be trained as research workers. I was happy to meet several of these young researchers, all are well versed in both Tibetan and Chinese and also eager to learn English or French.They are indeed much aware of and concerned with the problem of Tibet. I found them open and easy to communicate with about academic research which they understand well and which our compatriots elsewhere hardly ever do. Moreover, I found

these young researchers completely free from any religious sectarian attitudes, the incurable disease of most of the Tibetans in other countries.

Dondup therefore proved to be a most enjoyable companion. On July 7th early in the morning we took a bus in Lhasa and travelled all day. We arrived at Ba-i in the evening and reached Nyingti (Nying-khri) the next afternoon. Nyingti, an old village a little west of Bon-ri in the basin of the valley, has now become an important centre since it lies at the junction of the road from Lhasa leading to Chamdo and to De-mo. From here we walked to the ruined Bonpo monastery of Tagtse (sTag-rtse) about 6 kilometers facing west. Down in the main valley the river Nyang-chu (or Gyamda Chu) flows smoothly from north-west to south-east. To my surprise, we found ourselves being welcomed by an old friend of mine from Amdo, gNyan-skyabs by name, now in charge of the reconstruction of the monastery. We used the monastery as our base during our whole stay in Kong-po. It was founded by lDong-sgom bsTan-pa lhun-grub, a hermit from Amdo, but the date of the foundation is unknown. It was partially destroyed by an earthquake in the 1930s and then finally the whole was razed together with seven monasteries during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. The monastic complex was fairly large if one judges from the ruins of the buildings.

July in Kong-po is not an ideal month for photography nor was it the right season for the cultural and social gatherings. However, our main interest was the geographical, historical and religious significance of Mt Bon-ri and its surroundings as they have never been studied before.






## THE THREE REGIONS

The three regions are Nyang-po, Dvags-po and Kong-po. We began to inquire as to the whereabouts of the Nyang-po region as soon as we crossed the Kong-po Pala pass which leaves the sKyid-shod valley and with the descent of which a new valley begins. The very name Kong-po Pala suggests that the Kong-po region already begins from there but this is misleading. As one crosses the pass a large torrential stream begins in the valley and flows down along-side the road towards the east. It gradually widens and turns south-wards developing into a very large river after receiving a number of tributary waters during its long course. At certain points, it is split up into several waters occupying the whole width of the basin of the valley. This is sometimes called Gyamda Chu as it passes through the area known as Kong-po Gyamda in the upper valley.[1] However, according to the *Bon ri dkar chag*[2] and also to the local people, this river is in fact known as Nyang-chu and according to our guide Tsewang Tenzin, who is 60 and knows the region very well, this valley is in fact Nyang-po (written Myang-po in the early documents) which begins from Kong-po Pala and stretches right down to the place where the river joins the Tsangpo (Upper Brahmaputra) as accurately described in the *'Dzam gling rgyas bshad*.[3] The Tsangpo here flows through the Dvags-po[4] valley from west to east. Captain F. M. Bailey, who crossed the Nyang-chu at the confluence in a coracle in July 1913, correctly noted the river on a map as "Nyang or Gyamda Chu".[5]

The Kong-po region proper would seem to begin from the point of the confluence of the two rivers in the textual sources, but we cannot be definite about this since Nyang-po itself now does not seem to exist as a separate region. Nevertheless, the three regions are always mentioned together in early sources suggesting that they are adjacent.

According to the Dunhuang documents, the three regions constituted three of the twelve princely states before the unification of Central Tibet and later were conquered during the reign of gNam-ri slon-btsan in the sixth century, but the people of those regions revolted during

1. On the valley Trasum to the east of Gyamda, see Brauen, 1986.
2. The full title is *gSang ba'i gnas mchog thugs sprul bon ri'i dkar chag yid bzhin ljon pa'i phreng ba*. A block-print edition existed, but in Kong-po I consulted a manuscript in bad condition belonging to our guide Tsewang Tenzin. I therefore cannot give exact references to that manuscript. A new edition based on the xylographic edition is being prepared in India by the Bonpo Monastic Centre. The author of the *dkar chag* is known as Blo-ldan snying-po *alias* Pad-'byung nam-mkha' rin-chen, Padma g.yung-drung dpa'-bo and Byang-chub rdo-rje. According to the bonpo chronology (Kvaerne, 1971), he was born in 1360.
3. Wylie, 1962: 96; Stein, 1959: 83, n. 226.
4. On this region, see Uray, 1988: 1503-10.
5. Bailey, 1914: 353. See also the map attached.

the time when Srong-btsan sgam-po (d. 649) was a minor and had to be brought back under his rule by him later.[6] During the reign of Kri Srong-lde-btsan (742-797) and Khri lDe-srong-btsan (c. 804-815) both Nyang-po and Kong-po were giving the status of *rgyal phran*, feudatory principality. The names of rKong dKar-po-rje and Myang-btsan khri-bo figure just after the name of the chief of 'A-zha (T'u-yu-hun) in a royal edict.[7] Kong-po particularly enjoyed such special status since its princes had a common ancestral origin with the *btsan po*.[8] It is not even included in the geographical and military division of the country whereas both Nyang-po and Dvags-po are included among the places belonging to the g.Yo-ru division.[9] We will return to the problem of Nyang-po in connection with the king Dri-gum btsan-po below.



*Plate 21: The confluence of Tsangpo and Nyang-chu (SGK 1987)*

According to the *Bon ri dkar chag*,[10] Mt Bon-ri is to be found at the confluence of the Nyang-chu and Tsangpo and is one of the three mountains which are situated in a triangle made up of rTse-la-sgang in the west, Mt Klu-dbang in the south and Bon-ri in the east. In another work, the confluence of the two rivers is described as a scorpion pointing its head towards rTse-la-sgang with the right horn the Nyang-chu and the left

6. Spanien, Imaeda, 1979: Vol. Pl. 568, 11.300-303.
7. *bka' gtsigs* (*KhG* Vol. 9(4), f. 130a, 1).
8. Richardson, 1985: 64-71.
9. *Cf.* Uebach, 1985: 151.
10. See note 2.



horn the Tsangpo, whilst its body is the combined rivers and its tail the downstream.[11] Indeed, the two great rivers meet at the base of the three mountains forming a great triangular shaped lake and then flow down together smoothly side by side so to speak, because the two waters do not mingle with each other for miles each one keeping its own course and shade of colour: the water of the Tsangpo looks dark whereas that of Nyang-chu whitish, hence the area situated on the south bank is called Chab-nag, Black water and that on the east bank Chab-dkar, White water. The well known dGe-lugs-pa monastery, Chab-nag-dgon is situated on the south bank.

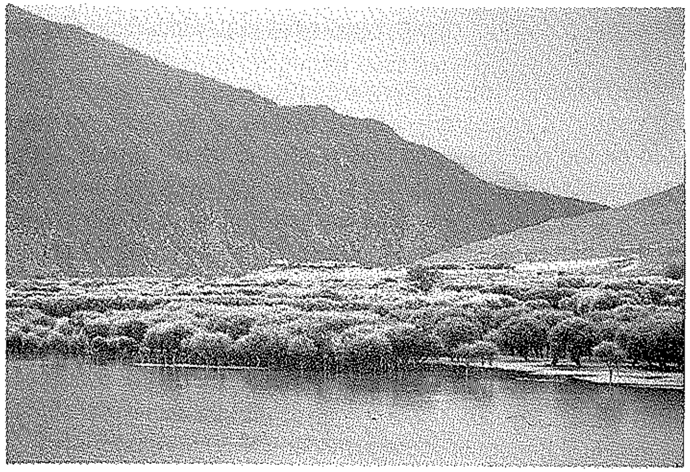


*Plate 22: The old rDzong of rTse-la-sgang in the background, the Tsangpo flows behind the rDzong to the south. The Nyang-chu in the foreground (SGK 1987)*

These topographical names shed light on the origin of the classification of the Bon doctrines into five categories known as *sgo bzhi mdzod lnga*, the 'Four Entries and the Treasury':

1 *dpon gsas* (rDzogs chen)
2 *'phan yul* (sūtras)
3 *chab dkar* (tantras)
4 *chab nag* (rituals)
5 *mtho thog mdzod* (cosmogony)[12]

11. *rKong btsun de mo'i zhus lan* (f. 10a), 55th section of the *sPrul sku blo ldan snying po'i gsung 'bum* (manuscript which I consulted at the monastery of Srid-rgyal dgon-chen in Kong-po).
12. *Cf.* Snellgrove, 1967: 16-19.

Lopön Tenzin Namdak rejected the suggestion that the term *'phan yul* is in fact a geographical name of 'Phan-po, north of Lhasa.[13] Yet it is certainly the name of the modern 'Phan-po. Under the reign of gNam-ri slon-btsan, this region was first called Ngas-po and later the king ordered it to be changed to 'Phan-yul[14] for some unknown reason. Moreover, it is known that the translations of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts were made there in the royal period and so the place is associated with these sūtras.[15] The terms *chab dkar* and *chab nag* are, too, geographical names with which some of the Bonpo rituals and tantras may have originally been connected. They therefore indicate the geographical location where the doctrines either were classified or originated. The *Bon ri dkar chag* states that it was at Mi-yul skyi-mthing that the rituals (*gto*) were classified. This place is just next to the Chab-dkar area.

The Tsangpo, which, after the confluence, is very broad, continues flowing gently in an easterly direction skirting the base of the *lha ri* Gyang-to on the east bank and that of Mt Klu-dbang on the south bank for about twenty kilometers before making a gentle bend at the point of the district known as De-mo. It then heads towards the south-east. A legend has it that it came to see Bon-ri before journeying towards India. As it flows to the south-east, the valley gradually becomes very narrow and this part of Kong-po is called Kong-'phrang, the gorges of Kong-po. The river then continues to circle the great mountain Namcha Barwa (gNam-lcags 'bar-ba) before heading south and finally passes into Assam as the Brahmaputra.

**Mt Bon-ri**

In the Tibetan terminology for sacred sites Bon-ri is a *gnas ri*, a word not readily translatable, but it conveys the idea of 'holy mountain'. Although Bon-ri is mentioned in works like *ZM*,[16] it was only made 'open' (*gnas sgo phye ba*) as a *gnas ri* in 1330[17] by the *ri ba* 'Brug-gsas (b. 1290), a Bonpo hermit. It was he who traced out the path to be followed by pilgrims, and this is said to have taken place in a contest with a Karma-pa lama.

In the *ZM*, the regions of Dvags-po, Nyang-po and Kong-po are presented as being inhabited by a barbaric population. "The people of Dvags-po eat frogs and even snakes; those of Nyang-po are carnivorous and those of Kong-po do not refrain from incest between brother and sister, and murder between uncle and nephew. The mountains in Kong-po

13. *ibid.*, p. 17.
14. Spanien, Imaeda, 1979: Vol. II, Pl. 563, 11. 184-85.
15. The Fifth Dalai Lama, *Tham-phud*, New Delhi 1974, Vol. II, p. 57.
16. Vol. II, f.52a, 2.
17. Kvaerne, 1971.



are like black pigs crying out; its waters are like the destructive cauldron of hell; its gorges are like the opening of a camel's mouth..."[18]. In the life-story of gShen-rab, Kong-po is the native land of his great demon rival known as Khyab-pa lag-ring and the people are described as savage and wear costumes made of *re ba*, a cloth normally made from yak's hair, black turbans and paint their faces with charcoal when they are defeated. We did not come across this custom, but they do wear animal pelts with the fur outside. These pelts have a hole in the centre so that they can be put on over the head. The head end of the pelt is at the back of the person who wears it. It has no sleeves and is open all the way down on either side. It is tied with a belt or girdle around the waist and the four limbs hang down: two in front and the other two at the back. The pelts used are either of brown antelope for the rich and the upper class or of goat for the poor. Women on the other hand wear monkey skins in the same manner, but with the fur inside on the top of their woollen clothes.



*Plate 23: A man of Kong-po (SGK 1987)*

The demon Khyab-pa is said to have stolen gShen-rab's seven horses and hidden them in the castle of Kong-rje dKar-po, the prince of Kong-po. It is for this reason, the story has it, that gShen-rab made the journey from 'Ol-mo lung-ring in order partly to tame the savage people in Kong-po and partly to recover his horses. It was also at this time according to the tradition that, when the demon tried to block gShen-rab's way by standing on a high black mountain on the south bank of the Tsangpo, gShen-rab miraculously created a mountain higher than that and he gave it the name Bon-ri.[19] The story of their competition and struggle in Kong-po assumed epic proportions and we cannot go into detail in this article. Moreover, they are retold in the *Bon ri dkar chag* which is being studied by our colleague Dr. Charles Ramble who recently made visits to Kong-po.

As a *gnas ri*, Bon-ri, unlike other sacred mountains in Tibet, is interesting in that even the Buddhists have to circumambulate it in the Bonpo way, i.e. in the anti-clockwise direction. It usually takes two days

18. Vol. II, f. 46b: *dag po sbal lcong sbrul yang zal nyang po rang sha rang gis myang/ rkong po... ming dang sring yang sdig mi lta/ tsha dang zhang yang dme mi sdig/ ri yang phag nag ngus pa 'dra/ chu yang kun rlag dmyal zangs 'dra/ rong yang rnga mong kha gdangs 'dra/ ... Cf.* also Blondeau, 1971: 73.
19. *ZM* Vol. II, f. 52a. It is also mentioned in the following Buddhist works: *ShM*, p. 379; bTsan-po No-min-han, *'Dzam gling rgyas bshad* (Wylie, 1962: 97).

and the distance is about 60 kilometers. During the construction of the road from Nyingti to De-mo many of the places and rocks considered as sacred and significant by the pilgrims were destroyed on the west and south-east base of the mountain. The pilgrims come from various parts of Tibet. A number of them stay there for a considerable time doing what is known as *bskor brgya*, one hundred circuits.

On July 10th at 6 a.m. we set out for the pilgrim walk from the monastery of Tagtse with our guide Tsewang Tenzin ad walked down to the village of Tagtse to follow the new road. We continued the march in a southerly direction keeping the Nyang-chu on our right. The valley is very broad with fields growing barley, wheat, and beans. We passed through the village of Bang-sna and after this we came upon a gigantic Chinese army barrack, but it was empty since all the soldiers had left for the border due to the tension between China and India at that time. Two more barracks similar in size were found on the way down. At this point, the famous temple Bu-chu – now being restored – can be seen on the west bank of the Nyang-chu. It is reputed to have been founded by Srong-btsan sgam-po to subjugate a demoness who personified the Tibetan land.[20] Here we were joined by several groups of pilgrims mostly coming from Amdo and Khams. At midday, we arrived in Mi-yul skyi-mthing where the Nyang-chu joins the Tsangpo.This place is associated with the myth of Dri-gum btsan-po. We will have occasion to discuss it below. From here we crossed a small and low ridge which marks the end of the valley through which we came. After turning to the left over the ridge we continued the march facing now towards the east with the Tsangpo on our right. We soon by-passed the village of Klu-sding on the right. The legend has it that it was here that the demon Khyab-pa tried to poison gShen-rab. And so this village is famous and feared for its poison by the pilgrims coming from remote places.[21] After a short distance from here, we came upon the village of rKong-yul bre-sna often mentioned in Dunhuang manuscripts[22] and in Bonpo sources as a place where the funeral rite for Dri-gum btsan-po is believed to have been performed. Near this village there were two springs where it is said that gShen-rab washed his horses after recovering them from the demon Khyab-pa. From here the valley becomes broader and more level with fields. The mountain *lha ri* Gyang-to rises to the left. This mountain is believed to be the one on which the first king gNya'-khri btsan-po descended from heaven. We will return to this question below. In the late afternoon, we came upon the

20. *Cf.* Gyatso, 1987.
21. The secret practice of poisoning strangers in Kong-po was a popular story in Tibet. Consequently travelling there was considered to be dangerous.
22. *PT* 1285 (Lalou, 1958: 8, 1.18; 12, 1.93; 17, 1.181; Thomas, 1957: 76 (Chapter IV, Text); Spanien, Imaeda, 1979: Vol. II, Pl. 558, 1.36.



village of g.Yung-drung-'dzin and had a good look at the famous ninth century inscription which is just beside it to the east. It is now well protected by a wall around it with a lot of space inside. Continuing the march through fields, we arrived in the village of sMan-ri around 9 p.m. and stopped there with a family for the night. The head of this family has two wives, one is Bonpo and the other rNying-ma-pa, converted by the lama bDud-'joms. The Bonpo wife joined us for the pilgrimage bringing plenty of food with her. The old custom of offering free lodging and food to pilgrims and travellers is still well observed in Kong-po. The next morning we set out again at 5 a.m while it was still dark. We first followed a track through the fields as a short cut and at a certain point the track leaves the plain and the Tsangpo. We then came upon the traditional pilgrim route marked with abundant prayer flags printed with mantras and prayers of both Bonpo and Buddhist faiths. At the side of Mt De-mo which is on the right, the track begins gradually to lead up the mountain slope crossing its small valleys through forests of rhododendron and all sorts of trees and flowers with open clearing on which were luxuriant grasses and flowers. On the way up we were joined by more groups of pilgrims. This time they were mostly from the local villages, because that day was a 15th in the Tibetan calendar. The view from the mountain was obscured by mist during most of the time of our ascent. At midday, we reached the shoulder of the mountain where there was a large *la btsas* heaped with prayer flags. Here pilgrims perform the fumigation ritual of *bsang*.[23] The place is also used as a picnic ground and for resting after the ascent. From here, we marched across some sloping ground keeping the misty, pyramid shaped peak (about 5,000 meters high) of Bon-ri on the left. After about 2 kilometers the track gradually leads down towards the south again through often rugged terrain, sparsely covered in pine forests. The descent began for us with torrential rain which made the track dangerously slippery all the way down. In the basin of the valley, we passed through the village of gZigs-zhu and from here instead of returning to Tagtse, our starting point, through the village of mKhar-se-mo, we made a detour and went to Nyingti, which is nearer, and stopped there for the night. We arrived there around 9 p.m. and were soaked to the marrow. All the other pilgrims were dispersed by the rain.

The circuit of the mountain does not therefore take one round the mountain in the strict sense of the term. It rather circulates over the west, south and east slopes avoiding the summit.

Most of the people of the villages situated along the pilgrim track consider themselves as Bonpo. According to Tsewang Tenzin the villagers of gZigs-zhu, mKhar-se-mo, Tagtse and Bang-sna are still steadfast

23. *Cf.* Article No.21.

believers in Bon whereas the people in the remaining villages do not make much difference between Bon and the rNying-ma-pa teachings. Each village consists of approximately eight to twenty or more houses. It appears that the late lama bDud-'joms was engaged in feverish missionary work in this region in the 1940s. Although he did not entirely succeed in converting the Bonpos to Buddhism, his teachings certainly left a very strong impression among the population. The presence of the Lhasa government's officials, the rDzong-dpon of rTse-la-sgang and the two large dGe-lugs-pa monasteries, De-mo and Chab-nag in the region must also have exerted great pressure on these Bonpo villages in the pre-1959 era.

Nevertheless, in spite of Buddhist harassement, the Bonpos in Kong-po seemed to have been very resistant. They maintained at least eight monasteries along the pilgrims track, but only four are really traceable. All of them are now in ruins. The monastery Srid-rgyal dgon-chen was originally a hermitage founded by the *ri ba* 'Brug-gsas and is now being reconstructed. It was mainly an establishment of the people from the regions of Khyung-po and Hor whereas the Tagtse monastery was an establishment of the people from Amdo. The monasteries of sTag-bro-sa – whose ruins I have not visited – and dGyes-ri were mainly centres for the monks of the local villages. There are also a number of hermitages hidden up the mountains. We visited a hermit at the cave of dBus-phug about 5 kilometers from the Tagtse monastery upstream in the valley.

The old village Nyingti is now a Chinese town, but the old Tibetan part still retains the characteristics of a Kong-po village. Although the villagers are mostly rNying-ma-pa, the village has preserved in its centre what is known as Nying-khri sku-shug, an enormous juniper tree, the Bonpo sacred tree, believed to have been planted by gShen-rab. It is protected by a stone wall and the wall itself is covered in prayer flags. When we visited it, an old woman with a child was performing the circumambulation of it in the Bonpo way. The bark of the lower part of the tree was all gone as it has been peeled off and taken away as relics by the pilgrims through the centuries, but it is now inaccessible due to the wall.

## Mt Gyang-to

The mountain range, where Bon-ri is to be found, consists of three distinguishable peaks which according to the *Bon ri dkar chag*, are: dMu-ri at the west, Bon-ri (or gShen-ri) in the centre and lHa-ri (Gyang-to) at the south-east. The latter is much lower than Bon-ri and its base touches the east bank of the confluence of the Tsangpo and Nyang-chu.



Although Mt Gyang-to[24] plays an important role in the myth of the foundation of Tibet's first kingship and later in the story of the re-establishment of the Yarlung Dyanasty after the killing of Dri-gum btsan-po, its place among Tibet's holy mountains has become somewhat obscured due to the prominence of other 'Buddhisized' mountains such as Ti-se and Tsa-ri. Yet Mt Gyang-to and its surroundings are from pre-historic times associated with the early kings. At the dawn of Tibetan civilisation, they figured in myth and gave birth to various rituals.[25]

It was also at the foot of this mountain that Dri-gum btsan-po's sons recovered his remains and built a tomb for them creating the precedent of erecting royal tombs. His second son Nya-khyi from there, too, set out to take revenge on his father's enemy and re-established the royal authority over the country from Yarlung. We will return to the question of the tomb below.

According to the myth, the first Tibetan king gNya'-khri btsan-po came down to earth from heaven and landed on a mountain called lHa-ri Gyang-to.[26] However, Tibetan historical works in general do not indicate clearly where this mountain is located when they narrate the myth.[27] It is often assumed to be somewhere in Yarlung. This assumption is partly due to confusion with the ultimate establishment of the dynasty in Yarlung. A good example of this is the recent work, *BG* (1985) which vaguely states: '..a famous mountain and a great holy place of the Bonpos in Yarlung'.

Prof. Haarh is right in accepting the *lHa 'dre bka' thang* which seems to locate it in Kong-po.[28] This is supported by two hitherto unknown *chos 'byung* recently published in Lhasa. These two works are no doubt much earlier than the *lHa 'dre bka' thang*, whose sources in any case was probably *ZM* for this location.

First, *DChB*, which was composed in 1260, contains documents comparable to those of the Dunhuang manuscripts, especially on the theme of the origin myth of the first Tibetan king.[29] *DChB* clearly locates Mt Gyang-to in Kong-po as is done in the *Bon ri dkar chag* in the following words: "among the mountains which he (the king) surveyed (from heaven), there was no other mountain higher and firmer than the

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24. In *ZM* (Vol. II, f.51b,5-6), Mt Gyang-to is a quite different and separate mountain from Bon-ri. *Bon ri dkar chag* therefore differs from *ZM* concerning the identification of Mt Gyang-to.
25. *Cf.* Article No. 19, pp. 324-26.
26. Spanien, Imaeda,1979: Vol. II, Pl. 555, 1.32.
27. e.g. *KhG* f. 6b.
28. Haarh, 1969: 274; Blondeau, 1971: 96,
29. *Cf.* Article Nos. 16 and 18. In his preface to *DChB*, Chab-spel Tshe-brtan phun-tshogs has suggested that this work is the one referred to as *lDe ston chos 'byung* in *KhG* and I think he is right.

divine mountain Gyang-to; among the plains, there was no other plain more wide and well situated than Se-mo gru-bzhi[30] in Kong-po..."[31].

In the second *chos 'byung*, similar to the first work in content, there is also a passage worth quoting here: "...surrounded by snowy mountain ranges, in the land where there is the head-source of the four great rivers (i.e. the region of Mt Ti-se), at the lower end of the three waters (i.e. the confluence of the Nyang-chu and Tsangpo), a place of high mountains and pure land at the peak of the divine mountain, Gyang-to..."[32].

These two passages show that the tradition of locating the mountain in Kong-po, as stated in *ZM* and *Bon ri dkar chag*, is of ancient origin, but to say just it is in Kong-po is not enough. Kong-po abounds with mountains just as any other part of Tibet. It is therefore important to specify, if it is at all possible which mountain the myth meant to be the centre of the world of the ancient Tibetans, the depository of the souls of the kings, and where gNya'-khri btsan-po had to abandon his culture of the gods and adopt that of man in order to be the first king of the black-headed people (*mgo nag mi*).

In *DChB*, gNya'-khri btsan-po is described as having first appeared on Mt Gyang-to. After visiting several places mostly difficult to identify, he goes to Bla-'brum gyang-do.[33] After this, he confronts opposition from the peoples of Nyang-po (*nyang srin*)[34] and Kong-po (*rkong srin*) which he overcomes. He then comes across sGam lHa-bo lha-sras who proclaims him as the lord of the country. Thereupon he abandons the clothes, food and drinks of the gods in order to adopt those of man. He then goes to the place of man, called Mi-yul gyi-'thing (skyi-mthing). From there, he sets out to travel to Yarlung stopping in various places in Dvags-po before arriving at Yum-bu bla-sgang.[35] As we have seen, the place Mi-yul skyi-mthing, which is just on the east bank of the lower end of the Nyang-chu, is still known to the local people by this name. This place-name occurs in exactly the same context in several ritual texts:

> "First, from where did the king appear?
> First, he appeared from the land of Phyva.
> Then, to where did the king descend?
> He descended into sKyi-mthing, the land of man".[36]

30. This place-name occurs in Dunhuang documents see Stein, 1971: 491. In Kong-po, there are places connected with the word *se mo:* Se-mo-mkhar, see *LShDz* (Karmay, 1972: 41 and note 48).
31. *ri gzigs kyi nang nas lha ri gyang (to las) mtho shing brtan pa ma mchis/ thang gzigs kyi nang nas/ kong (yul) se mo gru bzhi las rgya che zhing bshams legs pa ma mchis/...* (p. 235).
32. *DJChB*, p. 101: *gangs re (ri'i) rgyud kyi ra ba chu bo chen po bzhi 'dus pa'i mgo gtsang po gzhung gsum gyi ltar (mdar) ri mtho la sa gtsang ba lha ri gyang mthon (to) gyi kha la.../*
33. I would think that this is a deformation of the name Gyang-to bla-'bubs, see below.
34. The text reads: *ljang srin. ShDz: byang srin* (Haarh, 1969: 411/dd).
35. pp. 235-38.



The suggestion that gNya'-khri btsan-po first established himself as a chief in Kong-po and then later moved to Yarlung is indeed supported by the works referred to above.[37]

There is no doubt that the identification of the mountain made by the Bonpo tradition goes back a long away in time. It is also significant that the ninth century inscription is to be found in the foreground of this mountain. The inscription recounts that the first king appeared on the *lha ri* Gyang-to and the two sons of Dri-gum btsan-po propitiated the *sku bla* De-mo.[38] Now, De-mo is the name of a mountain and area situated just beside Bon-ri in the east. The goddess of this mountain is known as rKong-btsun De-mo in later works and often presented as the chief of the *sa bdag* of Kong-po.[39]

However, the high peak known as Bon-ri was perhaps the *lha ri* Gyang-to before receiving the name Bon-ri. H. Uebach (1985: 8) is the first scholar to have noticed a similar identification made in the biography of Ka-thog Tshe-dbang nor-bu (1698-1755).[40] The Bonpos probably began to call it Bon-ri when the legend of gShen-rab's struggle with the demon Khyab-pa in Kong-po was created, at the same time retaining the earlier tradition and belief by identifying one of the low peaks of the mountain range complex as the *lha ri* Gyang-to. Moreover, as we have seen, the opening of Bon-ri as a *gnas ri* dates only from 1330, although Bon-ri is mentioned in *ZM* whose compilation to my mind, nevertheless, belongs to the eleventh century. From what period the mountain came to be called Bon-ri depends in turn on the question of the date of composition of this work.[41]

**Where is the tomb of Dri-gum btsan-po?**

According to the inscription referred to above, Dri-gum btsan-po resided in the castle of 'Phying-ba stag-rtse in Yarlung as did his ancestors.[42] In the Dunhuang chronicle, it is stated that he went to Yul

36. *dang po rgyal byung gang nas byung/ dang po phyva yi yul nas byung/ de nas rgyal bab gang du babs/ mi yul gyil mthing (skyi mthing, skyi thon) de ru babs/ (Sha brgya zan brgya glud rab(s) rdzong dang bcas pa (gTo 'bum dgos 'dod sna tshogs re skong,* Gangtok 1978, p. 310); *PT* 1285 (Lalou, 1958: p. 14, 1.123)
37. Snellgroe, Richardson, 1968: 23; Haarh, 1969: 274.
38. Richardson, 1985: 66-67.
39. *Cf.* Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1975: 182 *et seq.*
40. *dPal rig 'dzin chen po rdo rje tshe dbang nor bu'i zhabs kyi ram par thar pa'i cha shas brjod pa ngo mtshar dad pa'i rol mtsho* (composed in 1819 by Rig-'dzin chos-kyi dbang-phyug), *Collected Works of Ka-thog-tshe-dbaṅ-nor-bu*, Vol. I. Dalhousie 1976, p. 186 (Uebach, 1985: 8).
41. *Cf.* Blondeau, 1971: 45-47; Article No. 10, n. 2.
42. Richardson, 1985: 66-67.

Myang-ro sham-po, the country of Lo-ngam rta-rdzi and there he engaged in a battle against Lo-ngam who however killed him and threw his body into a river (*rtsang chu*). Downstream (*chab gzhub*), it was held up by a *klu*. The two princes were given the names of Sha-khyi and Nya-khyi and banished to Kong-po. Later the princes found their father's remains at rKong-yul bre-sna and built a tomb at Gyang-to bla-'bubs.[43] These statements concerning banishment and the names of the two princes also agree with the inscription and the *Bon ri dkar chag*. G. Tucci (1950: 2) makes no remark concerning the tomb of Dri-gum btsan-po mentioned in Dunhuang documents.

Now, the question is this: where is Myang-ro sham-po, the country of Lo-ngam? Certain *chos 'byung* seems to locate it in Myang, i.e. the modern Gyantse region in Tsang.[44] However, there is great geographical confusion in later works between, on the one hand, Myang in Tsang and its river Myang-chu which begins up in the mountains of Gang-bzang and after flowing through the Gyantse valley empties into the Tsangpo near Shigatse[45] and, on the other, Nyang or Nyang-po adjacent to Kong-po and its river Nyang-chu which after flowing through the Nyang-po valley, joins the Tsangpo at the junction of the three regions: Nyang-po, Dvags-po and Kong-po. In the Dunhuang chronicle, Nyang-po near Kong-po is also written as Nyang-yul. It would seem that Myang-ro sham-po was situated in Myang-yul, i.e. in Nyang-po, and in my opinion, it was here in Nyang-po where Dri-gum btsan-po was killed if he ever existed and his remains were thrown into the Nyang-chu and later found downstream below Mi-yul skyi-mthing which is next to the village of rKong-yul bre-sna. The *Bon ri dkar chag* also states that the corpse was found near the confluence of the Tsangpo and Nyang-chu and the funeral rite was performed at rKong-yul bre-sna.

At Mi-yul skyi-mthing, to which we have already referred, there is among the ruins a mound which looks exactly like the small royal tombs in 'Phyong-rgyas. Our guide first said that it was a cemetery (*dur khrod*) where corpses were fed to vultures. However, in recent years, the vultures have been hunted by the Chinese soldiers so much that that there were no vultures left. Consequently the mound was no longer used as a cemetery. On further inquiry, it appeared that the mound was a tomb and that it was that of Dri-gum btsan-po! It then struck me at once that in the Dunhuang chronicle, it is stated that the tomb of this king *was* built in a place called

43. Spanien, Imaeda, 1979: Vol. II, Pl. 557-58, 11.13-49: *gyang to bla 'bubs kyi mgur du bang so brtsigs so/ Cf.* Panglung, 1988: 320-69.

44. e.g. *KhG* f. 7b; Ariane Macdonald, 1971: n. 137.

45. However, in Myang, there is a hill named: rJe gri-gum btsan-po-ri (*Myang stod smod bar gsum gri ngo mtshar gtam gyi legs bshad mkhas pa'i mjug gnas*, attributed to Tāranātha, Lhasa 1983, p. 6).



Gyang-to bla-'bubs and in fact the mound is situated at the base of Mt Gyang-to.

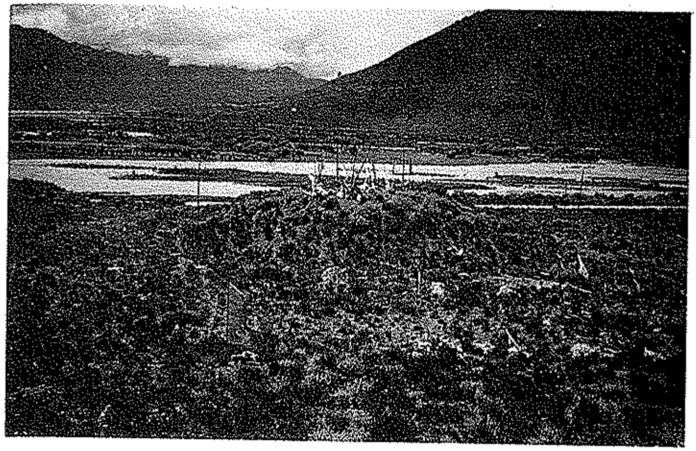


*Plate 24: The are a of Mi-yul skyi-mthing where the mound is situated, the Nyang-chu flowing down from the west towards the south-east (SGK 1987)*

It would seem that the term *bla 'bubs* is a name for the south-west foot of Mt Gyang-to. Certain scholars have translated it as 'la tente de l'âme' although it is difficult to imagine what tent has got to do with soul.[46] The term *bla* of course designates soul among other things from an early time, and the soul was symbolised by the turquoise (*bla g.yu*) which was worn by the people either on the head or the neck, a custom still widely practised among the people of the Tibetan culture.[47] The word *'bubs* has the sense of that which is pitched or *'bubs pa* to pitch. It has also the sense of explaining the essential points of a text when it appears in a phrase like *khog 'bubs*. The place is called *bla 'bubs* perhaps because it was there that rituals dealing with the souls of the early kings were performed.

gNya'-khri btsan-po also goes to a place called Bla-'brum gyang-do which I think is a deformation of Gyang-to bla-'bubs. At any rate, the line of the Dunhuang document can be translated as 'the tomb was built at the neck of Gyang-to bla-'bubs' (*gyang to bla 'bubs kyi mgur du bang so brtsigs so/*).

We therefore have literary evidence which seems to correspond to the geographical location. In my opinion, the mound at Mi-yul skyi-mthing is the tomb referred to by the Dunhuang document. However,

46. Ariane Macdonald, 1971: 222; Following J. Bacot, E. Haarh (1969: 381) has also accepted the same meaning.

47. *Cf.* Article No. 19.

only archaeological excavation perhaps will be able to give a clear answer. Let us hope that it will be carried out one day.[48]



*Plate 25: A Kong-po village house*



*Plate 26: Kitchen in a Kong-po house*

48. The *chos 'byung* referred to above (note 31) states that a tomb was built at Cha(chab)-dkar se-mo-phug in Kong-po, but the corpse was taken to Yarlung and buried there (*rkong yul cha dkar se mo phug tu bang so brtsigs te spur ma bzhugs... 'phyang po drang mo drang chung gi zom la sbas...* p. 162). The same story is also told in the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* by sTag-tshang dPal-'byor bzang-po (Chengdu 1985, pp. 133-34).
A certain number of old tombs in other places were found by the Tibetan archaeologist Sonam Wangdu. He describes them in his following books written in Chinese with Tibetan titles: *lHa sa'i rig dngos kyi gnas yig*, Lhasa 1985, p. 87; *sNe gdong rdzong gi rig dngos gnas yig*, Lhasa 1986, pp. 85-109; *Gra nang gi rig dngos gnas yig*, Lhasa 1986, pp. 169-71.





*Plate 27: Bonpo and Buddhist mantras*

*Plates 25-27: SGK 1987*

# The Four Tibetan Medical Treatises and their Critics

In a symposium dedicated to the bicentenary of Cosma de Körös, it is only fitting to recall his philosophical analysis of the Tibetan medical work, the *rGyud bzhi* which he published for the first time in 1835.[1] More recently some of its sections have been studied by well known scholars.[2]

Vairocana, who was one of the first seven Tibetan Buddhist monks, is considered to be the originator of the rDzogs chen thought in Tibet and it is in connection with our studies in rDzogs chen and the legends of this personage that we naturally came to look into the question of his translation works on astrology and medicine, particularly the *rGyud bzhi*.[3]

The origin of this medical work has been a heated subject, not only among the physicians, but also among the general Tibetan scholastics since around the fourteenth century.

Scholars in the West, who have so far studied the medical work or its parts, have either accepted a particular tradition according to which the work is of Indian origin or often engaged themselves in an argument based on philological comparisons, thereby trying to prove that the work is in fact not a translation from Sanskrit.

These two trends of studies do not seem to have taken into account the enormous amount of works devoted to the same question by the Tibetans themselves from the fourteenth century onwards. It is on this last aspect of the study of the *rGyud bzhi* that we are, in this paper, particularly interested.[4] We shall try to show why the controversy was concentrated upon the question of the origin of the text and what conclusions were finally drawn.

The value of the *rGyud bzhi* as a medical work and the authoritativeness of the medical theories and practices which it contains

1. *JASB*, IV (1835), pp. 1-20.
2. Emmerick, 1977: 1135-42; Meyer, 1981. For a complete list of the philological studies on the *rGyud bzhi*, see Meyer, 1981: 33-38.
3. *VD*, ff. 65a3. 78a3 (Karmay, 1988a: 17-37). *Cf.* also *ChR*, Vol. II, f. 41 (Article No.6, n. 29); O-rgyan gling-pa (1329-1367), *Padma bka' thang*, sDe-dge edition, Chapter 84, f. 139b3.
4. I must state that I did not have any formal medical training in Tibet apart from the study and memorization of the first two chapters of the *Phyi ma rgyud*, usually known as *rTsa mdo* and *Chu mdo*. They formed a part of the five major sciences (*rig gnas lnga*) in the monastic curriculum.



have never been questioned, as was the case to the rDzogs chen thought and other doctrines in Tibet. It was accepted and considered by all as the fundamental work on medicine. The borrowing of various medical theories and practices from India, China, Zhang-zhung and Nepal are in a certain way acknowledged with a kind of pride in the fact that the work is so universal in its content and scope.

It seems that the first work which refers to Vairocana's connexion with the *rGyud bzhi* is the *rNam thar bka' rgya can*,[5] written by Sum-ston Ye-shes-gzungs, a disciple of g.Yu-thog Yon-tan mgon-po. According to this work, the *rGyud bzhi* was first expounded by the Buddha Rig-pa'i ye-shes in Oḍḍiyāna. It finally came into the hands of the *paṇḍita* Zla-ba dga'-ba[6] of Kashmir from whom Vairocana obtained it. The latter then revealed it to the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan (742-797) who concealed it inside a pillar on the second floor of the main temple in bSam-yas. After 150 years,[7] it was taken out by Gra-ba mNgon-shes, who handed it over to his disciple dBus-pa Dar-grags, who in turn entrusted it to 'Tsho-byed dKon-skyabs. The latter finally gave it to g.Yu-thog Yon-tan mgon-po.

Besides this, there is another *gter ma* tradition. The Bonpo *gter ston* Khu-tsha Zla-'od is believed to have 'rediscovered' some medical texts which are however never specified and he is often identified with g.Yu-thog Yon-tan mgon-po by both the Bonpo and rNying-ma-pa traditions.[8] 'Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse (1820-1892), while accepting more or less the *gter ma* tradition coming from the *gter ston* Gra-ba mNgon-shes also affirms in his *mTshan tho* that the Bonpo *gter ston* is, in fact, one and the same person as g.Yu-thog Yon-tan mgon-po, and that it was he who made the rediscovery of the *rGyud bzhi*.[9] However that may be, this identification was not acquiesced to even by his own disciple, Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho (1813-1899).[10]

5. Also known as *sKu lnga lhun grub ma* and *rNam thar med thabs med pa*. The latter is not to be confused with the *rNam thar bka' rgya ma* of g.Yu-thog rnying-ma, written by Jo-bo lHun-grub bkra-shis. The *rNam thar med thabs med pa* is to be found in g.Yu-thog Yon-tan mgon-po, *sMan gzhung cha lag bco brgyad* (hereafter *sMan gzhung*), Varanasi 1967, pp. 331-34.
6. He is probably identical with Candranandana who is an author of a medical text (*T* Vol. 142. No. 5801); *Cf.* also Emmerick, 1977: 1136
7. The text has *'dod lha zhag gsum*, 'three nights of Kamadeva' which according to bKra-shis dpal-bzang (*gSo ba rig pa'i rtsod spong*, p. 138, see for reference note 21) is 150 years. In Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho's calculation, this would be in 1098 (*TTGL*, p. 126).
8. *LShDz* (Karmay, 972: 146).
9. *Gangs can gyi yul du byon pa'i lo pan rnams kyi mtshan tho rags rim tshigs bcad du bsdebs pa ma ha pan dita si la ratna'i gsung* (*The Collected Works of 'Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse dbang-po'i bka'-'bum*, Delhi, *sa lug* (1979), Vol. Da, f. 209).
10. *TTGL*, p. 118.

The account of the *gter ma* tradition given in the *rNam thar bka' gya can* which we have mentioned earlier, came to be maintained as the orthodox view with regard to the origin of the *rGyud bzhi*. There are, however, at least two oddities in this work which must be mentioned. Gra-ba mNgon-shes (1012-1090), whose real name is dBang-phyug-'bar, was a Buddhist monk. It is said that he founded the monastery of Gra-thang. However, the short account of him, which is in *DNg*,[11] does not mention his having 'rediscovered' the medical work or any other texts. The polemicist Sog-zlog-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1552-1624), who saw a *rnam thar* of this monk, states that it did not mention the rediscovery either.[12]

The other interesting aspect of the *rNam thar bka' rgya can* is that it is totally silent with regard to the question of g.Yu-thog the first, who is said to have lived in the eighth century.[13] He is in all probability a transposition of g.Yu-thog Yon-tan mgon-po the second, who certainly lived around the twelfth century.[14]

We now come to the other tradition according to which the *rGyud bzhi* was composed by g.Yu-thog Yon-tan mgon-po, the second (hereafter g.Yu-thog). This tradition goes back to the *g.Yu thog bla brgyud lo rgyus*.[15] It is a work concerning the history of the *g.Yu thog bla sgrub*, but its author is not known. It was probably written by a disciple of g.Yu-thog. According to this *lo rgyus*, when g.Yu-thog completed writing the *rGyud bzhi*, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, gods and goddesses appeared in his vision and congratulated him for his most astonishing achievement. Moreover, they prophesied that his work would be of tremendous benefit to all living beings in the future.

We have therefore two divergent accounts concerning the origin of the *rGyud bzhi* both issuing directly from close disciples of g.Yu-thog

11. *DNg* (Roerich, 1949: 94-95).
12. *rGyud bzhi bka' bsgrub nges don snying po* (hereafter *rGyud bzhi bka' bsgrub*), Collected Writings, Delhi 1975, Vol. No. 9, p. 235).
13. In the preface of the Beijing edition (1982) of the *g.Yu thog gsar rnying rnam thar*, which is based on the Lhasa xylographic edition, 790 (A.D.) is given as the birth year for g.Yu-thog, the first. It is hard to ascertain on what basis one can give such a date for this fictitious character. A thorough philological and comparative study of the *rnam thar* of g.Yu-thog, the first still awaits.
14. According to Sog-zlog-pa (*rGyud bzhi bka' bsgrub*, p. 231), he was contemporary with the Sa-skya-pa master Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan (1147-1216). Sog-zlog-pa does not seem to accept the tradition of g.Yu-thog rnying-ma and g.Yu-thog gsar-ma (*cf. rGyud bzhi bka' bsgrub*, p. 234).
15. *g.Yu thog bla sgrub kyi lo rgyus nges shes 'dren byed dge ba'i lcags kyu*, quoted in *rGyud bzhi bka' bsgrub* by Sog-zlog-pa, p. 232; sDe-srid Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho, *dPal ldan gso ba rig pa'i khog 'bubs legs bshad baidurya'i me long drang srong dgyes pa'i dga' ston* (hereafter *Khog 'bubs*), Kansu 1982, p. 280; also in his *VNg*, sMad cha, p. 1557.



himself. This situation seems to have led to the formation of two separate groups, each determined to uphold its own tradition. The contest between the two groups was on the question of whether the *rGyud bzhi* is a translation of an Indian work or simply written by g.Yu-thog. The debate, which continued throughout the centuries, happily did not involve any sectarian dogmatic or philosophical views. Both parties consisted of authors belonging to different schools.

To these two groups of contestants we might well add the position of the Bonpo which in fact has a quite different claim as to the origin of the *rGyud bzhi* although they never joined in the debate of the other two groups. According to them, the medical work was originally written in the Zhang-zhung language.[16] This hardly helps to prove their claim, but what is true is that certain medical texts are believed to be of Zhang-zhung origin and even today we can find, among the Dunhuang manuscripts, a medical text which states that it was based on the Zhang-zhung medical tradition.[17]

As the contest between the two groups grew and gradually developed, there came to be what is known as the "establishment of the *rGyud bzhi* as a canonical work" (*rgyud bzhi bka' ru bsgrub pa*) among the group who maintained the thesis of its Indian origin. The *bka' bsgrub* thesis then began to form a part of almost every work known as *khog 'bubs* which deals with the historical development of the medical tradition in Tibet. The term *khog 'bubs* is by no means peculiar to this tradition, but it came to be used in the sense of an exposition dealing particularly with the historical aspect of the *rGyud bzhi*. The *khog 'bubs* works are, therefore, not necessarily concerned with either medical theories or practices which are usually dealt with in various commentaries of the *rGyud bzhi* itself.

The *Khyung chen lding ba*,[18] which is one of the first *khog 'bubs* type works, is attributed to g.Yu-thog, but internal evidence shows that it is certainly not a work by him.[19] It is primarily devoted to the presentation of the Tibetan medical system (*gso rig*) as an indispensable part of Buddhist religious practices. It then leads on to a discussion of the *rGyud bzhi*, presenting it as a certain type of canonical work (p. 10).

16. Ga-rgya Khyung-sprul 'Jigs-med nam-mkha'i rdo-rje (1897-1956), *gSo rig rgyud 'bum bye ba'i yang snying 'gro kun 'byung 'khrugs nad gdung kun sel sman sbyong stong rtsa phan bde dpyid kyi dga' ston rol ba'i rgyan* (*The Practice of Medicine*, Delhi 1972, text No. 1, p. 379)
17. *PT* 127.
18.. *sMan gzhung*, pp. 3.19.
19. It refers to the *rNam thar med thabs med pa* by Sum-ston Ye-shes-gzung (*sMan gzhung*, p. 15; *cf.* note 5).

In his *khog 'bubs*, sDe-srid Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho has given about ten *khog 'bubs* (pp. 562-69), which he consulted amongst other general historical works on the medical tradition (*gso rig chos 'byung*).

Now the other group, who follow the tradition of the *g.Yu thog bla brgyud lo rgyus* and do not accept the *bka' bsgrub* thesis, also produced a number of works, usually designated *rtsod yig*, but they are now very rare, almost non-existent. At present, we find only few passages quoted from them in certain works holding the *bka' bsgrub* thesis. Some of the chief proponents of this group are Bo-dong Phyogs-las rnam-rgyal (1376-1451) and sTag-tshang Shes-rab rin-chen (b. 1405).[20]

In his *gSo ba rig pa'i rtsod spong*, bKra-shis dpal-bzang,[21] who seems to have lived around the fifteenth century, quoted a number of passages from a *rtsod yig*. Unfortunately neither the title nor the name of the author of the *rtsod yig* are given, but this *rtsod yig* has put forward at least sixteen points in order to prove that the *rGyud bzhi* is a Tibetan work. I have extracted most of these passages below and at the same time try to show which part or line in the *rGyud bzhi* they refer to.

bKra-shis dpal-bzang obviously belongs to the group who maintain the *bka' bsgrub* thesis. Various people urged him to write his work in order to reply the criticism made by their opponents. Due to the scarcity of textual material at present, we know very little of the circumstances in which he lived and the precision of his dates. He was, however, a disciple of the well known author of medical works, Mi'i Nyi-ma mthong-ba don-ldan. Both the master and disciple belonged to the Byang-pa school, one of the two principal medical schools in Tibet, the other one being the Zur-pa school.[22]

bKra-shis dpal-bzang defended the *bka' bsgrub* thesis, but the arguments of his opponents are mostly based on quite sound judgements. His replies tend to be narrow and dogmatic and most of the time very naive. His opponents, to start with, raise the objection as to why the *rGyud bzhi* begins with the sentence: "At one time thus I did expound" (*'di skad bdag gis bshad pa'i dus cig na/*) instead of the usual formula: "Thus have I heard at one time" (*'di skad bdag gis thos pa'i dus cig na/*), if it is to be considered as a canonical text. The criticism therefore begins with the very first sentence of the *rGyud bzhi* which is the foundation of its structural presentation.

20. *rGyud bzhi bka' bsgrub*, p. 214; *VNg*, sMad cha, p. 1556.
21. bKra-shis dpal-bzang ye-shes mchog-ldan, *Theg pa kun dang mthun (thun) mong du byas pa gso ba rig pa'i rtsod spong (bZo rig kha śas kyi pa tra lag len ma and other texts on the minor sciences of the Tibetan scholastic tradition*, Dharamasala 1981, pp. 111-52). This author is probably identical with Byang-pa lha'i btsun-pa bKra-shis bzang-po who wrote several works including a *bKa' bsgrub rnam nges dpag bsam ljon shing* among others on medicine, *cf. Khog 'bubs*, pp. 563-68.
22. *Cf. Khog 'bubs*, p. 306 *et seq;* Meyer, 1981: 81.



Due to the time limit, we cannot discuss here all the details of the opponents' arguments. Nevertheless, suffice it to say here that they take into consideration the following criteria: religion, history, linguistics, popular beliefs, customs, habits, diets, botany as well as utensils, medical or otherwise. One of the favourite arguments for proving the Tibetan origin of the *rGyud bzhi* are the references made in many places of the Bon religion. Another argument, used in a rather humorous way, is the line: "the best diet is *rtsam pa* made of old barley" (*zas kyi mchog tu nas rnying rtsam pa mchog/*) which occurs in the fourth part of the *rGyud bzhi* (p. 654). Sog-zlog-pa, in spite of the fact that he wrote a work entitled *rGyud bzhi bka' bsgrub*, was convinced by this argument. He exclaims: "This really shows a Tibetan character!" (*'di ni nges par du bod nyams byung ste/* p. 217).

It seems that the party, which claimed the *rGyud bzhi* as a purely Tibetan work, gradually won or at least were able to influence the views of their opponents. We have noticed, for example, the position of sDe-srid Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho. While affirming that the *rGyud bzhi* is a canonical work, he admits that certain parts of it cannot be of Indian origin. He concluded that the parts in question were added (*bsnan kha*) by g.Yu-thog.[23]

In his *rGyud bzhi bka' bsgrub*, Sog-zlog-pa, reflecting upon various arguments for an against, reaches the conclusion that one cannot maintain the *rGyud bzhi* as translation of an Indian work. However, in order to please those who insist upon the *bka' bsgrub* thesis, he humorously points out that g.Yu-thog was after all an embodiment of Bhaiśajyaguru and therefore the *rGyud bzhi* has the value of a canonical work (p. 223 *et seq.*). This is also the reason why he called his work *rGyud bzhi bka' bsgrub*.

Later rNying-ma-pa masters waver between the two traditions, for example, Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho who first reproduced the usual account concerning the *gter ma* tradition of Gra-ba mNgon-shes in his *TTGL* (pp. 125-27), but later he somewhat changed his opinion in *Shes bya kun khyab*, his magisterial work. In this he states: "The *rGyud bzhi*, which is the compendium of all works on medicine, was composed by g.Yu-thog Yon-tan mgon-po". A little further on, he continues: "This does not contradict the fact that Gra-ba mNgon-shes could have merely rediscovered a short basic text (*rtsa ba tsam*) which eventually came into g.Yu-thog's hand, and that would make more sense (*'brel chags pa*)".[24]

23. *Khog 'bubs*, p. 229; *VNg*, sMad cha, p. 1556.
24. *Kongtrul's Ecyclopaedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture*, SPS, Vol. 80, New Delhi 1970, Vol. OM, pp. 588-89.

Here are now the sixteen points of arguments of those who do not accept the *bka' sgrub* theis.They are contained in the *gSo ba rig pa'i rtsod spong:*

i *'di skad bdag gis bshad pa ces (zhes) 'gyung bas/ thos pa 'byung ba rnam (dang) rang 'gal phyir/* (p. 114)

"It says thus have I expounded. This does not accord with the form of thus have I heard"[25] (*cf. rTsa rgyud.* p. 1, line 6).

ii *mu gtegs (stegs) 'khor dang bcas pa 'byung bas kyang/ tshad ldan bzhung (gzung)bzang min/* (p. 117)

"It is not a proper and good work, for non-Buddhist attendants are mentioned" (*cf. rTsa rgyud*, p. 3, 1.8)

iii *lus dang byis pa gdon lus stod / mtshon dang mche ba rgas ro tsa/ gso spyad (dpyad) gang na'ang/ ngas pa yin (yan) lag brgyad du de rab grags / zhes bshad de rgyud bzhi nas bshad pa yi/ lus dang byis pa mo nad gdon / mtshon dug rgas pa ro rtsa (tsa) dang / yan lag brgyad du bshad par bya'o/ zhes bshad pa gnyis cung mi mthun pas/ rgyud bzhi bod du sbyar ba yin /* (p. 117)

"General illness (*lus*), pediatry, demonology, the illness of the upper body, surgery, toxicology, rejuvenation of the old and aphrodisiac medicine. These are called the eight branches,[26] and are treated as such in all (Indian) medical works", but the *rGyud bzhi* differs from these: General illness, pediatry, the illness of woman, surgery, toxicology, rejuvenation of the old, aphrodisiac medicine and *ro tsa*.[27] "The *rGyud-bzhi* was therefore composed in Tibet" (*cf. rTsa rgyud*, p. 5, 1.10).

iv *srog 'dzin spyi bor gnas/ khyab byed snying la gnas 'dir bshad/ dus 'khor la sogs pa'i rgyud sde dang 'gal bas/ mi mkhas pa'i bob du sbyar/* (p. 118).

"(The *rGyud bzhi* says) that the *srog 'dzin* (*prāna*) is in the head and the *khyab byed* (*trarala*) is in the heart, but as this is contrary to the *Kālacakra* tantra,[28] etc. the *rGyud bzhi* is therefore composed in Tibet by a not very learned man" (*cf. bShad rgyud*, p. 28, 11.5, 8).

25. The usual formulas which appears at the beginning of sūtras is: *'di skad bdag gis thos pa'i dus gcig na / (evam maya śrutam ekasmin samaye/).*

26. This refers to *Yan lag brgyad pa'i snying po bsdus pa, T* Vol. 141, No. 5798, p. 8-3-2, *cf.* Meyer, 1981: 36. This work served as the theoretical text for medical practice in Tibet before the *rGyud bzhi* appeared. When the latter came to be used, a controversy started as the *rGyud bzhi* somewhat differed from the Indian classic with regard to the question of the 'eight branches' between what are called brGyad-pa smra-ba and those who followed the *rGyud bzhi*. This topic is extensively treated in *rTsod bzlog gegs sel 'khor lo* (*sMan gzhung*, pp. 167-80).

27. *Cf.* Meyer, 1981: 34, n.1.

28. However, this is not very explicit in the tantra, see *K* Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 136-5 p. 137-1.



v *rtsa-ba'i rgyud las a ru ra/ ro drug ldan bshad / gzhan du lantshva'i ro med (par) bshad pas nang 'gal skyon /* (p. 119).

"In the *rGyud bzhi*, the myrobalan fruit is said to have six kinds of taste, but in another place, it says that the fruit has no salt taste. It is a contradiction"[29] (*cf. rTsa rgyud*, p. 2, 1.8; *bShad rgyud*, p. 63, 1.15).

vi *'byung ba shing me sa lcags chu/ zhes pa bshad pas nag rtsis dang mthun/ bod du byas pa'i bstan bcos yin /* (p. 119).

"Wood, fire, earth, iron and water are given as the five elements in accordance with the astrology.[30] It is a treatise composed in Tibet" (*cf. Phyi ma rgyud*, p. 561, 11.7-8).

vii *lo mgo rgyal la byed pa'i phyir/ bod kyi so nam pa yi lugs dang mthun/ bka' dang bstan bcos kun dang mi mthun par/ bod pa dag gis sbyar/* (p. 120).

"The star *rgyal* is designated as the beginning of the year in accordance with the Tibetan agricultural calender system.[31] It is therefore composed by a Tibetan as this system does not agree with any canonical or *śastra* works" (*cf. Phyi ma rgyud*, p. 560.I, 11).

viii *dus (bzhi khams) lnga'i ngos 'dzin la/ bdun cu rtsa gnyis shing khams 'chin rtsa rgyu / zhes sogs bdun cu rtsa lnga khrag (phrag) lnga la/ sum brgya drug cu nges par bshad pas ni/ tshes grangs lhag*

29. This probably refers to the line: *a ru lan tshva ma gtogs ro lnga ldan/* which according to Sog-zlog-pa (*rGyud bzhi bka' bsgrub*, p. 225), is to be found in the *bShad rgyud*, but it does not seem to be in the recent edition of Bod-ljongs mi-dmang dpe-skrun-khang. It should be in chapter 19 where *a ru ra* is listed among the fruits and plants which have an astringent taste (*bska ba*, p. 63).

30. Because of the astrological elements in the *rGyud bzhi*, one tradition maintained that it was translated from the Chinese. This tradition seems to have originated in *Padma bka' thang*, dGa'-ldan phun-tshogs-gling edition, Chapter 85, f. 142b, 4 and later penetrated several historical works, e.g. *LShDz* (Karmay, 1972: 24) where it is stated that the work first went to China from Zhang-zhung and from where it was translated into Tibetan as a Buddhist work.

31. This refers to a passage in *Phyi ma rgyud* (p. 560) where the beats of the pulse-rate are explained in conjuction with the seasonal changes. However, the edition of the *rGyud bzhi* I use has the month of the star *rta pa* (=mchu) as the beginning of year (*lo mgo*) and the month of the star *rgyal* is indicated as the 12th month.
The *rGyud bzhi* had obviously been through recension (*cf.* Meyer, 1981: 92), but according to the Fifth Dalai Lama, it was Zur-mkhar-ba Blo-gros rgyal-po who, when editing the old xylographic edition of Gra-thang, the monastery of Gra-ba mNgon-shes, 'corrected' (*dag cha mdzad pa*) the passage in question (*rTsis dkar nag las brtsams pa'i dris lan nyin byed dbang po'i snang ba*, Lhasa xylographic edition, f. 30a4). The first month of the year in the So-nam-pa system, like the old astrological system (*nag rtsis rnying ma*) is the 12th month of the *nag rtsis gsar ma*. The latter since the Mongol period, came to be called the system of *hor zla*, *cf. rTsod spong*, pp. 121-22; *VNg*, sMad cha, p. 1179.

*chad zla gzhol (shol) sogs/ mi 'byung bas nas (na) dkar rtsis lugs dang 'gal/* (p. 122).
"As for the identification of the four seasons and the five elements in conjunction with the five kinds of pulses, there have to be exactly 360 (days) divided by 5=72 (in a year). This means that there would be no extra or missing days and months in the calendar system. It is therefore contrary to the *dkar rtsis* system" (*cf. Phyi ma rgyud*, p. 560, I.9).

ix *ngos 'dzin bon mdos dang krad (bskrad) pa dang/ zhes 'byung mod bon zhes bya ba ni/ gsung rabs (rab) rnams su ston pas ma gsungs zhing/ dam pa'i chos dang lta spyod mi mthun pas/ gzhung 'dir khungs su 'byung ba'i(bas) sangs rgyas kyis/ gsungs pa'i bka' las gzhan du smra ba thos /*
"It says (if a malignant spirit is determined as the cause of illness), one relies on Bon, offering of effigies, and exorcism, but Bon is not taught by the Teacher. Its theories and practices do not agree with those of the Saddharma. Bon is indicated here as a source for the *rGyud bzhi*. One therefore understands that the *rGyud bzhi* is something different from the canonical works" (*cf. Phyi ma rgyud*, p. 566, I.4).[32]

x. *rgyud 'dir ja dang zhes bshad pas/ rgya gar ba la ja yi bshad pa med/ de'i phyir na rgya gar nas ma byung/ bka' dang bstan bcos rnams su ja ma drags(grags)/ 'di ni bob du sbyar/* (p. 125)
"In this treatise, tea is mentioned. The Indians did not have treatises on tea. Neither in the canon nor in *śastra* is there any question of tea" (*cf. Phyi ma rgyud*, p, 567, I.5)

xi *dkar yol 'dir bshad cing/ rgya gar ba la dkar yol med pa'i phyir/ rgya gzhung ma yin bod du byas/* (p.126)
"Porcelain is mentioned, but the Indians did not have it. The *rGyud bzhi* is therefore not an Indian work, but composed in Tibet" (*cf. Phyi ma rgyud*, p. 567, I.9)

xii *chu de rus sbal gan rgyal (skyal) nyal zhes pa nas bzung lha 'dre so-so yi/ ming dang gnod pa'i phyogs sogs bsal bar stan (gsal bar bstan) / bka' bstan rnams su 'di ltar ma bshad pas/ bon dang nye bas bob du sbyar ba 'dral* (p. 126)
"One has clearly indicated the names of gods and demons and the quarters in which they reside from the line: the water (i.e. urine) is to be viewed in the manner of a tortoise lying on its back.[33] This (conception) is not attested in the canonical works. it is very close to Bon. (The *rGyud bzhi*) is therefore written in Tibet" (*cf. Phyi ma rgyud*, p. 570.I.89)

32. References to Bon are also made in *bShad rgyud*, p. 49, 1.7; *Man ngag gi rgyud*, pp. 243, 1.7; 346, 1.5; 392, 1.16; 411, 1.17.
33. For a detailed account of the tortoise, see *VNg*, sMad cha, pp. 1218-19.



xiii *zas kyi mchog tu nas rnying rtsam pa mchog/ ces bshad de phyir bob du sbyar/* (p. 128)
"It says the best food is *rtsam pa* made from old barley. So (the *rGyud bzhi*) is composed in Tibet" (*cf. Phyi ma rgyud*, p. 654, I.15).[34]

xiv *nga ni(yi) bka' btsan byin che dar ba yis (dang)/ ji ltar smos pa'i smon lam 'grub gyur cig/ ces pa la sogs pa sangs rgyas rang nyid kyi gsung rab dar rgyas smon lam mi 'debs so /* (p. 129)
"The Buddha does not say prayers for spreading his teachings as may my words be convincing, appealing and flourishing!" (*cf. Phyi ma rgyud*, p. 667, I.1.)

xv *'di'i tshig don rtogs sla bas/ rgya gzhung min/* (p. 129)
"It is not an Indian work, for it is easy to understand (i.e. since the *rGyud bzhi* is not a translation from Sanskrit and its language being natural Tibetan)".

xvi *bka' 'gyur bstan 'gyur snga phyi yi/ nang du ma sdus phyir na rgya gzhung min/* (p. 129)
"The *rGyud bzhi* was not considered as an Indian treatise, for it is not included in early or late *K* and *T* collections".[35]

34. There are other references to *rtsam pa* : *bShad rgyud*, pp. 57, 1.12;364, 1.12; 370, 1.16; *Phyi ma rgyud*, p. 614, 1.4.
35. This argument is still used, *cf.* Meyer, 1981: 91-92.

# PART IV

# Myths and Rituals

# The Etiological Problem of the Yarlung Dynasty

The well-known historical work *BZh* [1] contains what purports to be titles of expositions given by King Ral-pa-can (*alias* Khri gTsug-lde-bcan, r.815–c.836) to the monks and his ministers on the subject of *lha chos* and *mi chos.*[2] I will not take up here the question of *lha chos* as it has been discussed by many scholars. Concerning *mi chos*, *BZh* states that both kings Khri Srong-lde-btsan[3] and Ral-pa-can gave expositions on law, history and etiquette. It specifies five titles of expositions said to have been given by Ral-pa-can. They are mostly, as will be seen, concerned with the different traditions of narrating the Tibetan royal history and its ancestral origins. I propose here to discuss particularly the first two of the five titles.

## 1. *Yo ga lha dge can*

Now, this title is either a deliberate deformation or an error committed by a scribe. I suspect the first. However that may be, it has been very faithfully copied out in later important works, such as *ShDz* [4] of the fourteenth century and *KhG.*[5] It is certainly a deformation, whatever cause it was, of the title: *Bon po'i yi ge lha dge(gyes) can* as is attested in *NyChB* (p.496). The corrupted title has greatly puzzled many authors, especially the word *yo ga*. Consequently some Tibetologists when faced with the title, as it occurs in *ShDz,* read it as *yog lha*[6] although *ShDz* gives very clearly the form of *yo ga lha las gyes pa.* The title refers to the Bonpo concept of the divine origin of gNya'-khri btsan-po, the first Tibetan king. We can accordingly translate the correct form of the title given in *NyChB* the 'separation from the gods (according to) the book of the Bonpo'. It refers to the mythical account of the origin of gNya'-khri btsan-po according to which the king is a descendant of the Phyva gods and came down from heaven and landed on the sacred Mt lHa-ri Gyang-to in Kong-po in order to rule the black-headed people. This indigenous myth is the very foundation of the concept of the royal power which enables the successive kings to rule and is given as the justification for

1. Stein, 1961.
2. *Ibid.*, p.75, 11.9-12.
3. *Idid.*, p.53, 11.6-8
4. p. 147: *dregs (bsgrags) pa bon lugs yo ga (yi ge) lba las gyes pa'i lor (lo) rgyus/*
5. *KhG*, f.5a, 7.
6. Haarh, 1969: 213; Ariane Macdonald (Spanien), 1971: 20.



Yarlung sovereigns' reign over Tibet. We all know that this myth is narrated in certain Buddhist works such as *rGyal po bka' thang* [7] and more often in Bonpo historical works,[8] but particularly in Dunhuang documents.[9] It came to form the basis of a particular tradition called in later Buddhist and popular works "the proclamation according to the Bon tradition" *(bsgrags pa bon lugs)* when other ways of presenting the origin myth of the Yarlung dynasty looked more appropriate and eventually became established. The phrase *bsgrags pa bon lugs* is simply a derivation of the two lines in *NyChB: bon po'i yi ge lha dge (gyes) can/ gnam nas babs zhes bsgrags pa'i lugs/* (p.496).

## 2. *gSang ba phyag rgya can*

Now, this the second title, corresponds to the line *rje nyid gsung pa phyag rgya can* of *NyChB* (p.496). Here the title refers to the tradition according to which gNya'-khri btsan-po is a descendant from one of the Indian royal lines. The parallel title in *NyChB* can be rendered as (the account) related by the Lord himself: the Sealed One. The word *gsang ba,* 'secret' in the title as found in *BZh* is, in my opinion, a deliberate alteration of the verb *gsung pa* by *gsang ba* does not change the overall meaning of the title or rendering it incomprehensible as is the case with the first title. The change simply contributed to the formation of the phrase *gsang ba chos lugs* with which we shall be dealing soon. We are here dealing with a tradition concerning the question of gNya'-khri btsan-po's alleged Indian origin as told in almost every late Buddhist *chos 'byung*. However, there is little agreement as to from which Indian royal lineage he descended. Some connected him with the personages of the epic story of the *Mahābharata*, others claimed him as a descendant from the dynasty of Magadha, like King Bimbisāra who were contemporaries of the Buddha, still others went so far as to connect him with the Śākya clan. Why the Tibetan Buddhist historians wanted their first sovereign to be a foreigner and particularly Indian is not easy to explain in a few words here. With the foundation of bSam-yas in the eighth century Buddhism became the state religion and accordingly Indian Buddhist culture was a much desired object of importation and we read in all *chos 'byung* about King Ral-pa-can's enthusiasm and zeal for the innovation even of Indian secular customs, but nothing really proves that he initiated such a tradition. However, in the eyes of the Buddhist clergy it was perhaps most significant if the ancestral lineage of the royal house also had a connection with a royal line in India, the holy land from which they had recently acquired their religion. This brings to mind also the identification of the

7. Dharamsala edition (undated), f.25a.
8. *SG*, pp.116–119.
9. E.g. *PT* 1038 (Lalou, 1953: 257–276).

king Khri Srong-lde-btsan with King Tsa/Dza whom we have studied elsewhere.[10]

Nevertheless, in *BZh,* this traditional account is ascribed to King Ral-pa-can whereas in *NyChB* (p.158), it is put into the mouth of Srong-btsan sgam-po, but the total absence of such an account in the Dunhuang documents, on the other hand, amply suggests that it is of late origin and probably belongs to the early twelfth century, but that again comes back to the question of *BZh.*[11] We shall have some words on this topic later.

The account of the Indian origin of gNya'-khri btsan-po, however, became the accepted and official version. It was later called the 'Secret one according to the Buddhist tradition' (*gsang ba chos lugs*). No source explains why this offical account should be kept hidden and yet be presened as the authorized version. However, some Buddhist historians have, not surprisingly, objected to this 'double standard' so to speak. Ne'u Grags-pa smon-lam blo-gros, for example. It is interesting to note that according to him, it was the bKa'-gdams-pa master, bCom-ldan rig-ral who first falsely claimed it to have been based on Indian sources,[12] but unfortunately we possess at present no works by this master for comparison.

In connection with the *gSang ba phyag rgya can,* I should like to mention the existence of such a tradition all through Tibetan Buddhist literature: I mean the biographical accounts of certain religious personages which often present a dichotomous pattern. While the account of the personage, concerning the activities of his existence, i.e. in actual life, is treated as 'unreal', his inner experience, hence his spiritual existence believed to be 'real', but the written account of this particular aspect of the life is invariably to be kept hidden and often known under the terms *bka' rgya ma, phyag rgya can* or simply *rgya can.* A good example for this, is the *gSang ba'i rnam thar rgya can ma* of the Fifth Dalai Lama.[13]

We have therefore two distinct traditions concerning the etiological myth of gNya'-khri btsan-po: on the one hand, the Bonpo tradition according to which the king descended from heaven and which was proclaimed (*bsgrags pa*) to the public, but in fact 'unreal'; on the other, the Buddhist tradition according to which the king was a descendant of an Indian royal line and this is accepted as 'real', but to be kept hidden from the public. Is it because the Tibetan public would not like the idea of their

10. Article No.6.
11. Stein, 1961: 65–92.
12. *sNgon gyi gtam me tog phreng ba,* in *Rare Tibetan historical and literary texts from the library of Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa,* Delhi 1974, p.64.
13. *A record of the visionary experiences of the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang-rgya-mtsho,* Smanrtsis shesrig spendzod Series, Vol.42, Leh 1972.



first sovereign coming from a foreign country? They would like, at any rate, to believe that he came from heaven, I should think.

Although the phrases *bsgrags pa bon lugs* and *gsang ba chos lugs* are certainly denominations of different traditions, they also occur, as pointed out by A.-M. Blondeau (1980-1981: 168)[14] and myself,[15] as actual titles of texts given among other works by Nyang-ral Nyi-ma 'od-zer. Guru Chos-dbang (1212-1270) also gives them in a similar context.[16] Here mention must be made of two scholars who have made a big contribution to the study of these legends: E. Haarh (1969: 168-185) and A. Spanien (1971: 206-211). Both made a detailed analysis of the question contained in *ShDz.* What we have so far been attempting to show is the basis of two etiological traditions and the earliest sources from which they developed. This then leads us to the question of the date of composition of *BZh* which is of course beyond the scope of the present paper. Let us therefore limit ourselves to the passage with which we began. It is in the second section of *BZh,* known as *sBa bzhed zhabs btags ma.*[17] It is therefore self evident that it is not an integral part of *BZh*, but a later addition to the main work (*zhabs btags ma*). This internal evidence shows that it is certainly later than mid-eleventh century, because it mentions among others the *lha bla ma* Ye-shes-'od (early eleventh century)[18] and Lo-chen Rin-chen bzang-po (958-1055), but earlier than mid-twelfth century since long passages of it are incorporated into *NyChB.*[19] However, the passages of *BZh* that appear in *NyChB* are often much clearer than *BZh* of the Stein edition, which shows that there were, as usual, different recensions of *BZh* from quite early onwards.

We now come to the three other titles, all concerned with the royal genealogy, but are very obscure.

### 3. *lTab ma dgu tsag can*

This is again a corrupted title. It corresponds to *'Dab ma dgu rtseg can* of *NyChB.* It is explained that there are three ways of counting the royal genealogy: *rkyang pa,* 'single', i.e. counting only the successive kings and this is called *rkyang pa gcig brgyud; khug pa,* 'double' or 'pair',

14. After completing my present paper, Mme A.-M. Blondeau very kindly showed me her article(1990), which examines very extensively the theory and origin of *bsGrags pa bon lugs.*
15. Article No.17, pp. 259-60.
16. *The Autobiography and Instructions of Guru Chos-kyi-dbang-phyug,* Paro 1979, vol.I, f.14-20.
17. Stein, 1961: 65-92.
18. *Cf.* Article No.1, 150-152(*cross reference needed*).
19. The passages begin from p.65, ll. 1.15 of *BZh* (Stein, 1961) and p.411 of *NyChB,* p.411.

this is called *za bzhugs rgan rabs can*, i.e. counting the successive kings with their queens *rkyan (rkyang) pa gcig rgyud (brgyud) rtsi ba yin/de ming za bzhugs rgan rabs can/ khug pa yum sgom smos pa la/ 'dab ma dgu rtseg can zhes bya/* (p.497).

**4. *Zings po sna tshogs can***

Nyang-ral explains that the *sPun po* contains a very detailed account (*rgyas bshad*) and it is therefore called *Zings po sna tshogs can* (*spun po rgyas bshad yin pa la/ zings po sna tshogs can du grags/* (p.497). However, the *sPun po can* is treated as a separate work from *Zings po sna-tshogs can* in *BZh* as will be seen below.

**5. *sPun po can***

In the bibliographical list of sources, Nyang-ral gives a title: *Yun po gser skas dgu ba* (p.501) and this probably refers to the *sPun po can* of *BZh*. If so there would seem to be two different works having the word *spun po* in their titles, but no source to my knowledge, so far has explained in what way they differ from one another. In any case, these last three titles still remain very obscure partly because our sources give practically no information on them. Nyang-ral's explanations, as seen, are too brief for us to substantiate their significance to any degree.



# The Appearance of the Little Black-headed Man

## (Creation and procreation of the Tibetan people according to an indigenous myth)

It is not certain whether myth always precedes ritual and, in my opinion, the question remains unsettled.[1] I do not propose to solve the problem here since in Tibetan tradition myth is an integral part of rite. Together with the ritual it forms a 'model' (*dpe srol*). The ritual cannot function without the myth and is therefore dependent upon it. In Tibetan popular rituals, particularly those belonging to Bonpo tradition, the mythical part is called *rabs* (account).[2] In this account, the officiant often identifies himself with the main deity or another character of the myth. In some cases, in order to justify his ritual action or to ensure its efficacy, he recalls that he is a follower (*brgyud 'dzin*) of the master who initially founded the ritual. The latter is therefore situated in a mythical spatio-temporal context. Knowledge of the preceding myth is therefore indispensable in order to perform the ritual action which is seen as the reenactment of the mythical past.

If we are fully to understand the rituals, we must therefore first examine the myth which, in the texts, precedes the ritual proper. The myth, however, is rarely given *in extenso*; generally it is only referred to. However, even when it is only alluded to, it is often associated with the gods who created the universe, such as Srid-pa Ye-smon rgyal-po whom I shall discuss later.[3] As I have already mentioned, recent ritual texts contain rarely more than an allusion to the myth, and even more seldom do they provide a coherent and structured account of it. On the other hand, early documents provide detailed and extensive mythical accounts which are not however followed by the liturgical text of the ritual per se.[4] The liturgical literature in its present state thus consists of fragmentary texts: early documents that provide fairly explicit mythical accounts but do not include the ritual prolongation, and later texts that deal with the ritual in detail but present the mythical precedent so schematically that it no longer seems coherent. For this reason, the analysis of our text, the *dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags*, seems to me of primary importance for the study of

1. *Cf.* Hocart, 1973: 22-31.
2. *Cf.* Stein, 1971: 482 *et seq.*
3. *Infra*, p. 265.
4. For example, Dunhuang manuscripts studied by Stein (1971).

popular rituals. Indeed, it is the only text available that provides a coherent and detailed account from both the cosmogonic and theogonic point of view. It sheds light on the fragmentary cosmogonic and theogonic myths which precede the popular rituals, and, more particularly, it explains the origin of the 'ransom' ritual (*glud*), that of the funeral rite and that of the gods in the *bsang mchod* ritual (fumigation offerings).

Rituals containing or referring to mythical accounts are generally designated by the term *gto*. The *gto* is primarily conceived as a means of curing the sick (*na gso*) and ensuring the victim's life by driving away the 'evil spirits' (*gdon, bgegs*) who plague him. This type of ritual is often characterised by two distinct phases: the first is called *smrang*, 'archetypal exposition', during which the priest intones the mythical part of the text, if it is given in detail, and the liturgical part of the ritual strictly speaking. The second phase is called *yas*, the obligatory 'ritual offerings', including the *glud*, 'ransom',[5] that must be provided by the sick person. Hence the *gto*, unlike the *cho ga* which refers to all rituals including funeral rites, is not a ritual for the dead.[6] In the early documents from the royal period (seventh to eighth centuries), the *gto* and *dpyad* ('diagnosis') are said to be applied in the case of death. But even in these instances they are practised to revive the dead and not as funerary rites (*shid, mdang*).[7] In addition, the *gto* is also one of the four traditional rituals used by the Bonpo priest to settle the everyday problems of the community and reestablish universal harmony: 1. *mo* ('divination'); 2. *rtsis* ('astrology'); 3. *gto* ('ritual'); 4. *dpyad* ('diagnosis').[8]

The *mo* and *rtsis* are consulted to determine the supernatural cause of disease whereas the *gto* and *dpyad* are applied to cure it. Although the

5. In his *Ju thig las rim* (xylographic edition from sDe-dge, 'Ju Mi-pham rgya-mtsho (1846-1912) writes: *ris kyi lha bdar/ khung gi smreng gyer/*, but in *ZJ*, Vol. Cha, chapter 28, f. 75, 3) Blo-ldan snying-po gives the more correct reading: *rigs kyi lha bdar/ khung gi smrang gyer/* - "Invoke the gods of the family; intone the archetypal exposition"; Shar-rdza bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan, 1859-1934, *Lung rig rin po che'i mdzod* [hereafter *Lung rig mdzod*] Delhi, 1972, p.132: *yas la nor 'khrul med par bsag/ smrang la chad lhag med par gyer/* - "The offering items should be collected without error; the archetypal exposition should be intoned with neither omission nor addition"; *gTo 'bum dgos 'dod sna tshogs re skong*, Thimphu, 1978, ff.125, 162: *nyin gsum yas su bsag/ mtshan gsum smrang du gyer/* - "During three days the offering items were collected. During three nights, the archetypal exposition was intoned." *Cf.* also Snellgrove, 1976: 308; Stein, 1970: 162, n.23. For a more detailed study on the *glud*, see Article No.10.
6. Lalou, 1952: p.5, l.23; p.6, ll.56, 58. We also have the term *gto chog*, a combination of the terms *gto* and *cho ga* having the same meaning as *gto*. The term *gto chog* mostly occurs in Buddhist texts.
7. Macdonald, Imaeda, 1978: *PT* 1134, Pl.416,l.49; Pl.462, l.88; *cf.* also Stein, 1971: 493-94.
8. Snellgrove, 1967: 24-41.



*mo* and *rtsis* are regarded, in practice and in the history of their origin, as two separate traditions, there is in fact no clear-cut distinction in theory between the two. As we shall see, this conceptual problem is apparent from the very outset.

A certain number of Dunhuang manuscripts show that this traditional system of four practices already existed during the royal period. Rather than finding the *rtsis* mentioned in later texts, we encounter *phya* ('prognosis')[9] which had the same function. As in later tradition, the four practices are applied together and likewise in the case of illness: *mo btab/ phya klags/...gto zhing dpyad dpyad na/* - "we practice the divinations and read the prognosis. We perform the rites and apply the diagnosis".[10] As in the case of the *mo* and *rtsis* in later tradition, the conceptual difference between the *mo* and the *phya* is even less clear in the early documents since the *phya* forms an integral part of the *mo* which was already very developed.[11] Hence Marcelle Lalou's translation of *phya* as 'spell' does not seem so far-fetched. Her interpretation of *dpyad* as 'oracle', however, conforms neither with the meaning given in the early texts nor with that given in later Bonpo tradition where it certainly refers to 'diagnosis'.[12] It is important to stress here that the *gto* is not necessarily a magical practice even though it has always been translated as 'magic ceremony'.[13]

These ancient documents, which are well known to us thanks to M. Lalou's remarkable research, show that contrary to what has often been suggested, later Bonpo tradition was never really cut off from its earlier tradition, at least insofar as the four practices are concerned. This system of the four practices is still an essential aspect of present day Bonpo tradition.[14] Thus according to this system, in which the *gto* plays a

9. The spellings *phya* and *phyva* have different meanings and this difference has not been noticed by Tibetologists, *cf.* Snellgrove, 1967: 302; Stein, 1981: 291. The spelling *phya* , i.e. without *va zur*, has two meanings: 1. 'prognosis' in *PT* 1285 (Lalou, 1958: ll.39, 42, 66, 86, 137) and *PT* 1047 (Macdonald, Imaeda, 1979: Pl.331-49); 2. It has the sense of 'vital force', or simply 'life' in *PT* 1040: *rgyal po'i phya nyams pa'i ngo* (Macdonald, Imaeda, 1979, Pl.333, l. 61); *nad pa la btab na phya nyams pa'i ngo* (*idem*, l.112). In later texts the term is often combined with other words e.g. *phyva tshe*, *phyva g.yang*. However, there is a great deal of confusion concerning the orthography of the term. Thus we find the form of *phyva* (sic) *tshe*, *phyva* (sic) *g.yang*, *cf. GG*, p.58. The spelling *phyva,* i.e. with *va zur*, on the other hand, designates a category of deities as we shall see. It is with this meaning that we invariably find it in *PT* 1287 (The Chronicle), 1038, and 1134 (Macdonald, Imaeda, 1979: *PT* 1287, Pl.574, l.446; Pl.575; ll.474, 476); *PT* 1038, Pl.460, ll.11, 13-14, 75-76, 80-81, 83, 88; *PT* 1134, Pl.463, ll. 98, 100, 113, 116; Pl.465, l.171); The rKong-po inscription (Richardson, 1985,pp.66, l.3).
10. Lalou, 1958: 11, ll.66-70; p.15, l.153; p.16, l.167.
11. *e.g.* in *PT* 1047.
12. Snellgrove, 1967: 25-27.
13. Lalou, 1958: 28, 30.
14. *Cf.* Article No.8, p. 141.

central part, the ritual can be neither understood nor performed without its mythical reference.

### The origin of the universe

Tibetan speculations concerning the myths of creation of the universe and the origin of the Tibetan people are contained for the most part in Buddhist works. Thanks to the work of Western Tibetologists, the Buddhist versions of the myths are now well known, particularly the myth according to which man was born from a monkey (believed to be the emanation of Avalokiteśvara, the patron saint of Tibet) and a she-demon of the rocks (a manifestation of the goddess Tārā). Although this myth is widespread in later Buddhist literature, it does not date far back into Tibetan history and the earliest texts in which it is mentioned date from around the thirteenth century.[15]

### The primeval egg

On the other hand, the myth according to which the world emerged from an egg, as is the case in our text, is very little known. Neither its origin nor its form have yet been seriously studied,[16] despite the fact that it forms the basis of a well-developed theme both in folk literature and popular rituals, especially among the Bonpo. Furthermore, it appears independently of the Buddhist tradition mentioned above. It is therefore important to determine the position it occupies in Tibetan tradition in general.

It is important to note at the outset that there is no coherent systematization in the different sources in which it is cited. The number of eggs, their colour, shape and size, as well as the way in which they hatch are as varied as the texts. Most of the sources nevertheless agree that primeval man was born from an egg. As for the origin of this myth, several Tibetan authors claimed to have traced it. Nyang-ral Nyi-ma 'od-zer (1136-1204) thus believed that a Bonpo qualified as 'non-Buddhist' (*mu stegs*)[17] and who came from the land of Tazig (Iran) to Tibet adhered to the theory of a primeval egg. Around the same period another author, dBon-po Shes-rab 'byung-gnas (1187-1241), held that the same theory originated in Hindu doctrines, namely Śivaism (*dBang-phyug-pa*).[18] These two opinions, especially the latter, are equally upheld by a number of Western scholars.[19] As R. A. Stein pointed out, the notion that the universe was created from an egg is equally attested in the *Mahābharata*, the *Brahmana* and the *Upaniśad*.[20] However, how this notion made its way into the Tibetan myth remains unknown. In any event, the myth dates back to the eleventh century, perhaps even earlier, since, by the twelfth century, its origin was already discussed by the authors mentioned above.

### The six delegates of the world

It is interesting to note that the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, which claims that the primogenitors of the Tibetan race are monkeys, does not mention the 'six clans of the little man' (*mi'u gdung drug*), even though certain sources do mention that the monkey and the she-demon gave birth to six offspring.[21] Our text not only mentions the 'six clans of little man' (*srid pa skos drug*), understood to be the six sons of Khri-tho chen-po whose classification and history are now well-known to us thanks to the detailed study of R. A. Stein,[22] but also the 'six delegates of the world' who in the myth appear first before the appearance of the 'six clans of the little man'.

The 'six delegates of the world' are:

I. The Phyva
II. The dMu
III. The gTsug
IV. The gNyan
V. The Ye
VI. The Ngam

To my knowledge our text is the only one in which such a list is included. So far, scholars dealing with the Tibetan creation myth have not come across it in any other source. Certain Bonpo texts mention, without providing a list, the *srid pa che drug*, the 'great six of the world'. This is

15. Ariane Macdonald, 1971: 202-205.
16. *Cf.* Tucci, 1949: 711-13.
17. *NyChB*, pp.160-61.
18. *Dam chos dgongs pa gcig pa'i 'grel chen*, Bir, 1975, Vol.I,Ga, p.292. This text entitled *'Jig rten mgon po'i gsung bzhi bcu pa* (hereafter *gSung bzhi bcu pa*) is a commentary by dBon-po Shes-rab 'byung-gnas on the 40 personal opinions of 'Jig-rten mgon-po concerning Buddhist doctrines. Here Shes-rab 'byung-gnas tries to elucidate 'Jig-rten mgon-po's opinion concerning Bon of which he says: *mu stegs dang bon gyi sgor zhugs pas bden pa mthong ba'i gnas med/* - "In taking to non-Buddhist doctrines and Bon, one does not have a chance to perceive the truth".
19. *Cf.* Tucci, Heissig, 1973: 273.
20. 1981: 170, 215. R. A. Stein does not give any exact references to the works he mentions. However, the myth according to which Brahma is born from an egg created by Śiva is known to the Bon tradition, *cf.* Shar-rdza bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan, *Lung rig mdzod*, p.89. The same cosmogonic theory is also attested in the *gTsang ma klu 'bum*. For an analysis of this work, see Stein, 1967-68: 415-20.
21. Stein, 1959b: 5; Ariane Macdonald, 1871: 203.
22. Stein, 1959b.

probably an allusion to the group mentioned above.[23] Yet this classificatory scheme is essential for understanding how the origin of man is presented in Tibetan tradition. According to our text, the first three members of the 'six delegates of the world' appeared following a wish made by Ye-smon rgyal-po (the King of Wishes). The text then explains how they are related through marriage[24] to several ancestors of the 'six clans of little man'. In the following pages, I will present the information that can be gleaned on each of these 'six delegates'.

## 1. The Phyva

The Phyva, particularly the god Phyva-rje Ya-bla bdal-drug,[25] are considered to be the ancestors of man in Tibet. In the myth concerning the first king of Tibet, gNya'-khri btsan-po, it is precisely this god who appears as the founder of the lineage.[26] The myth of the first king is not mentioned in our text, but it is said that Srid-pa sNe-phrom la-khra,[27] equally a Phyva god and the last of the thirty-seven[28] sons of Ya-bla bdal-drug, is sent on earth by his father to establish the human race. In the myth of the first king, it is Khri'i bdun-tshigs, the fourth of Ya-bla bdal-drug's seven sons, who is the father of the first king. The latter descends on earth to be the first king of the Tibetans. Therefore, according to this myth, Tibet was already inhabited by men but had no king. In any event, gNya'-khri btsan-po and Srid-pa sNe-phrom were both begotten by dMu goddesses and are therefore *dmu tsha* or *dmu'i dbon-po*, 'nephews of the dMu'. Both descend on earth using either the cord (*dmu thag*) or ladder of the dMu (*dmu skas*), or both. The myth concerning primeval man contained in *RPS* [29] is identical to the one in our text. Neither source treats the myth of the first king since, as *RPS* indicates, they are concerned with the 'ancestry of subjects' (*'bangs kyi mi rabs*). Conversely, *ShDz* [30] recounts the myth of the first Tibetan king but does not mention that of the first Tibetan people. Yet this mythic tradition concerning the first king of Tibet, which is developed in various versions can, in my view, be traced back to a single source, the *bsGrags pa bon lugs*, which I shall discuss later.

The Phyva are also considered to be the creators of the universe since they are regarded as the primordial ancestors. This concept has often been criticised by certain Tibetan scholastic authors who argued that Buddhism does not admit the existence of a world creator. They compared it to Saivite doctrines: *phyva dang dbang phyug gis byas par 'dod pa*, 'those who hold that (the world) was created by the Phyva and Iśvara'.[31] This is due to the fact that the role of the Phyva was conceived in much the same manner as that of Iśvara in Śaivism. The sense of the expression *phyva dang dbang phyug* corresponds to that of *bon dang mu stegs*,[32] 'Bon and the non-Buddhist (doctrines)'. It is therefore clear that the Bon were considered as upholding the idea that the Phyva are the creators of the world[33] just as Śiva is for the Śaivite. However, this assimilation is purely Buddhist: none of the Bonpo texts dealing with theogonic or cosmogonic themes refer to Śiva as the creator of the world. On the other hand, the Phyva are clearly considered as such; but they are indigenous gods and therefore bear no connection to Śaivism. The expression *phyva dang dbang phyug* already recurs frequently in the *lTa ba dang grub mtha' sna tshogs brjed byang du bgyis pa* by Rong-zom Chos-kyi bzang-po (mid-eleventh century).[34] Futhermore, it is now a well known fact that the Tibetan Buddhists were already fiercely opposed to Bon beliefs prior to the tenth century and that, at the same time, they readily criticised Hinduism. The expressions quoted above clearly show that this tradition of criticism was kept alive throughout the subsequent centuries. This Buddhist perspective seems to have equally influenced Western scholarly opinion in recent works.[35]

23. *ZJ*, Vol. Cha, chapter 28, f.69b,4; 'Ju Mi-pham rgya-mtsho, *Srid pa 'phrul gyi ju thig dpyad don snang gsal sgron me* (hereafter *Ju thig dpyad don*), xylographic edition from sDe-dge, ff.11b, 13a, 395a. One also finds the form of *srid pa thon drug* in the same work (f.193a).
24. See p. 265.
25. The name of this deity is variable: Ya-bla bdag-drug in the rKong-po inscription (Richardson, 1985, p.66, 1.3). The deity's residence is situated in heaven: Ya-bla dgung-gi yang-steng (Thomas, 1957: 12).
26. The rKong-po inscription (Richardson, 1985, p.66, ll.3-4); Macdonal, Imaeda, 1979: Pl.555, III, IV (*PT* 1286); Pl. 312 (*PT* 1038); *Cf.* also Macdonald, 1971: 205-19.
27. *RPS*, p.6: sNe-phrom lag-khra.
28. This number is unstable. *RPS* gives 35 (p.6).
29. *Ibid*, pp.4-7.
30. *ShDz*, pp.147-57 (Haarh, 1969: 171-218; Macdonald, 1971: 207-10).
31. dBon-po Shes-rab 'byung-gnas, *Dam chos dgongs pa gcig pa'i 'grel chen*, pp.201, 248, 250, 292.
32. *Ibid*, p.288.
33. *KhG*, f.5a: *phyva dang gnam la dga' zhing*, "the (Bonpo) like the Phyva and heaven".
34. *Selected Writings (gsung thor bu) of Rong-zom-chos-kyi-bzang-po*, sManrtsis shesrig spendzod, Vol. 73, Leh, 1974, VII, pp.493-50. However, there is certain confusion in late writings of both Buddhist and Bonpo authors concerning the sense of the expression *phyva dang dbang phyug*. The word *phyva* in the expression is taken at one time as a name of Śiva, at another time as two separate names of two different personages; e.g. Klong-chen rab-'byams(1308-1363) writes: *phyva'am dbang phyug chen po* (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, Kalimpong, undated, f.49a,1), but *phyva dang dbang phyug* on f.52a,3. The same tendency is attested with Bonpo authors: sGa-ston Shes-rab 'od-zer (c.15th century), *Mu stegs tshad (tshar) gcod gtan tshigs thigs pa'i rigs (rig) pa smra ba'i mdo 'grel* (lithographic edition, Delhi, undated, f.16a,2,5; 16b,1; *Lung rig mdzod*, pp.88, 90.
35. For example, Tucci, Heissig, 1973: 272-75 and its review written by D. S. Ruegg, *T'oung Pao*, Vol.LXI, 1975, p.316.

## 2. The dMu

The dMu are seen as the ancestors of man in various countries such as Khotan (Li), Nepal, or Iran (Tazig) and as the ancestors of animals. In our text, they are not included, as in other texts,[36] among the 'six clans of little man'. The term Tazig normally refers to the countries situated to the west of Tibet, namely Iran. In the geographical myth of 'Ol-mo lung-ring, a place located in that region, the lineage of gShen-rab Mi-bo is traced to the dMu and the five kings who preceded dMu-rgyal Thod-kar, the father of gShen-rab Mi-bo, are mentioned. Several of these kings married Phyva women. What distinguishes the dMu and the Phyva, however, is that they both reside above the thirteenth stage of heaven (*gnam rim pa bcu gsum*). Hence they are often identified as the *gnam gyi lha,* the 'gods of heaven'. In the myth relating the descent of the first king, gNya'-khri btsan-po, the king is born in the land of the dMu and his maternal uncle provides him with various objects for his descent: the ladder and the cord of the dMu that allow him to descend from the thirteenth stage of heaven onto the sacred mountain Gyang-to in Kong-po. For this reason, the cord and ladder are referred to as *dmu thag*, the 'cord of the dMu', and *dmu skas*, the 'ladder of the dMu'. It is also by means of these two objects that the king returns to heaven when his son reaches the age of thirteen; in other words, without leaving his mortal remains behind. The six kings who follow the first one return to heaven in the same manner. In our text, Srid-pa sNe-phrom is the one who uses the ladder of the dMu to descend. The cord is not mentioned, probably owing to an error in the manuscript.

In the rituals, the ladder and the cord have come to symbolise the connection between man and heaven. The cord of the dMu plays an essential role in popular rituals such as birth and marriage.[37] In both these rituals, a multi-coloured string is attached to the sinciput to symbolise man's divine origin. By virtue of this rite each person owns a rope with which to ascend to heaven. In connection to man's relation with the divine, it is perhaps useful to quote the following passage from *ShDz: srid pa'i lha rgyud ma bshad na/ mi yi (dmu) thag su yis 'dzin/* - "If the history of the divine lineage (of men) of the world had not been explained, who could hold (understand) the *dmu thag* of men?" ( p. 460).

This practice, in fact, dates back to very early times. Reference to it is found in a Dunhuang manuscript on divination where in answer to a question the diviner replies as follows: *bud med bkra shis ma gchig (gcig gis) dmu dag(thag) 'dogs shing pyag rstal (phyag 'tshal) ba'i ngo* - "An auspicious woman who ties the cord of the dMu and prostrates herself is

36. Stein, 1959b: 18-19.
37. *ZJ*, Vol. Cha, chapter 28, ff.106a-111b; Vol. Nya, chapter 41 (*Mi rje srid pa gdung 'dzin gyi sras sprul ba'i mdo*), ff.9b-10b.



the sign" [38] The *dmu thag* is also sometimes associated with the notion of the 'rope from heaven to grasp' (*gnam gyi 'ju thag*) as opposed to that of the 'nail to fasten on earth' (*sa yi brtan phur*) in astrology.[39]

## 3. The gTsug

All our text reveals about the gTsug is that they are the ancestors of the Klu, aquatic beings corresponding to the Nāgas in Indian mythology. According to the *Nyi sgron*,[40] however, they are also the ancestors of man in various countries, notably Gilgit (Bru-sha). Thus in certain sources, including our text, the gTsug, like the Phyva and the dMu, play an important role in both the cosmogonic and theogonic accounts. In this myth, the term *gtsug* refers to one of the categories of divine beings among the 'six delegates of the world'. The gTsug, the Phyva, and the dMu thus form a triad: *phyva dmu gtsug gsum.* This triad occupies a distinct theogonic position among the 'six delegates'. This distinction extends to rituals and texts devoted to divination.[41] Although our text does not literally refer to the Phyva, the dMu and the gTsug in terms of a 'triad', this notion seems to derive from the way in which they were created by Ye-smon rgyal-po. In my opinion, the notion of the triad is not merely a later ritual development, but probably dates back to very early times. Again this raises the issue of the text's date, or rather the antiquity of the tradition it evokes. We already know that the term *gtsug* is associated in various ways to the Phyva and the dMu in the Dunhuang documents and in the inscriptions on the stone pillars in Tibet. It is also the subject of dispute among French Tibetologists. Some claim it refers to the 'non-Buddhist religion of the kings' during the early period,[42] while others say it designates 'the political savoir-faire, the art of ruling, the wisdom of institutions, and ethical conduct'.[43] In any event, I will only retain here its connotation of a 'category of divine beings' of which we can be certain, at least so far as our text is concerned.

## 4. The gNyan

All that is mentioned about the role of the gNyan in relation to the other 'delegates of the world' is that in marriage ceremonies they always figure in the cognatic lineage, like the dMu, as opposed to the Phyva who

38. *PT* 1047 (Macdonald, Imaeda, 1979: Pl.339, l.191).
39. For a more detailed study on the dMu, see Stein, 1959: 54-66.
40. *NyZG*, f.42b.
41. *ZJ*, Vol.Cha, chapter 28, ff.70a, 81a; *Ju thig dpyad don*, ff.15b, 36a, 43a, 126a, 203a, 232b, 271a. Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho (1813-1899), *mDo khams sde dge'i rgyal khab tu bod blon mdo mkhar ba'i btsun mo byon skabs mda' dar 'dzugs pa'i 'bel gtam* (xylographic edition, sDe-dge), ff.1a, 2a.
42. Macdonald, 1971: 57-67.
43. Stein, 1981: 169; also 1985.

always appear on the agnatic side. The gNyan generally share the same characteristics as the 'dieties of the local land' (*yul lha*) and for this reason form one of the three categories of supernatural entities that figure in popular rituals, particularly Bonpo rituals: the *lha* (gods such as the Phyva) of the upper world (*sa bla*, celestial gods), the *klu* of the underworld (*sa 'og*, underground dieties) and the *gnyan* of the middle world (*sa steng*, gods of the atmosphere). They are also seen as the protectors of the ancestral spirits (*mtshun mgon*).[44] In our text, however, the gNyan are distinguished from the 'deities of the local land' *per se*. The latter are considered as the descendants of 'O-lde gung-rgyal, one of the four Phyva brothers (*phyva rab mched bzhi*),[45] whereas the gNyan are not. *GG* also shows the gNyan as a different category of beings from the *yul lha*. Their lord, lHa-rabs gNyan-rum-rje, resides between heaven and earth (*gnam sa bar*).[46] The gNyan are nevertheless closely related to the *yul lha* in the cult of the latter for the following reason: the first three sons of Khri-tho chen-po were born from a gNyan woman. The gNyan are therefore the maternal uncles of the three brothers known as lDong, dBra, and 'Gru. In a triangular war between man, the gNyan and the bDud (the last two being non-human), the gNyan kill Khri-tho chen-po, the father of the six sons. The gNyan are required to offer compensation to their human nephews: six animals, one for each son. The first four animals: an eagle, a dragon, a yak and a tiger are regarded as warrior gods. Each of these animals thus represents both the lineage and the 'warrior god' of the first four clans (lDong, dBra, 'Gru, and sGa). They are also known as the 'four great gNyan' (*gnyan chen sde bzhi*) and the four gods of 'good fortune' (*rlung rta'i lha bzhi*).[47] This group of animals is currently referred to as *rlung rta*, 'wind horse' and finds its concrete expression in the printed flags (*dar lcog*) erected on roof tops and mountains. In iconography, these animals are generally situated, as shown here, at the four corners while a horse (*rta*) galloping on clouds occupies the centre of the image. In Buddhist iconography and literature, the yak is often replaced by a white snow lion (which has become the national emblem of Tibet). In the image of Nakhi origin shown here, both the yak and the lion are depicted but not the horse.

The meaning given to *rlung rta* is good fortune'. Hence the expressions: *rlung rta dar ba*, "the rising of good fortune' and *rlung rta rgud pa*, 'the decline of good fortune'.[48] It seems, however, that there is some confusion surrounding the interpretation of this concept. First, our

44. See note 90.
45. See p. 266.
46. *GG*, p.54.
47. SP, ff.5, 44.
48. For a discussion of the term *rlung rta* and its ritual aspects, see Article No.22.



text, which is the only source that provides this interesting explanation concerning the origin of the *rlung rta*, does not say whether these animals represent the cardinal points as certain Tibetologists have proposed. Futhermore, in Bonpo rituals of fumigation offering (*bsang mchod*) destined to the deities of the local land, the five animals of the *rlung rta* have come to symbolise the five components of the human person: the eagle symbolises vital force (*srog*); the tiger the body (*lus*); the dragon prosperity (*dbang thang*); the lion good fortune, the horse the 'soul' (*bla dpal*). The horse is thus conceived as a component part as well as a denomination of the whole: on the one hand, it represents the soul and on the other, 'good fortune'. But in Bonpo tradition 'good fortune' is already represented by the lion. We are faced with a combination of two sets of representations: the four gods of the *rlung rta* and the four astrological elements: the *srog*, the *lus*, the *dbang thang*, the *rlung rta* to which a horse has been added to represent the 'soul'. The lack of coherence in the current interpretations of the *rlung rta* stems from the merger of these two distinct representations, mythical or conceptual, whose original meaning has been lost. The five animals nevertheless remain the objects of a cult in the *bsang mchod* rituals.

The following is an example of the type of prayer addressed to them, which, despite the obvious influence of Buddhism, remains essentially based on animalistic representations:

1. "May the eagle, king of birds, subjugator of the three realms, protect my life from the Lord of Death, by making it resemble the nature of heaven when he approaches me.
2. May the red tiger with black stripes whom no one would dare to defy, protect my body from illness by making it grow like the wish-fulfilling tree.
3. May the turquoise dragon, lord of sound who produces lightning, protect my wealth from all form of pernicious opposition, by expanding it like a lake in summer...
4. May the white lion with a turquoise main, without rival, remove the obstacles from the path of my action and wishes, by making my good fortune as white as the snow-capped mountains...
5. May the horse galloping with the magical speed of the clouds, prevent the glory of my soul from being scattered by the hindering wind, by accumulating its quintessence like rain clouds..."[49]

49. A manuscript in my possession entitled *Klung rta dar ba'i gdams pa yod, f.1b,1:*
*srid gsum zil gnon bya khyung rgyal po yis/*
*bdag gis (gi) tshe srog nam mkha'i rang bzhin ltar/*
*'chi bdag bdud kyi(s) bskyed du med par mdzod/...*

*'gran dos mi rdzi mtshal stag bya rog can/*
*bdag gi sku lus dpag bsam tshul rgyas nas/*

## 5-6 The Ye and The Ngam

Our text provides no further information on these last two members of the 'six delegates of the world' except to say they were born from a multi-coloured egg. This is all the more unfortunate since these two are the least known. The Ye and the Ngam are nevertheless mentioned in various other sources.[50] If we know nothing of their origin, their role in the procreation myth is no less important in our text than that of the other members. Indeed, the creator god Ye-smon rgyal-po whom we encountered earlier appears here as Ye-rje sMon-pa, the leader of the Ye. A great number of important gods belong to this category. Foremost among them are: Ye-mkhyen dgra-bla in the form of an eagle (*khyung*), dPa'-chen Ver-ma Nyi-nya (half-human and half-animal),[51] the Thugs-dkar, the

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*mi mthun nad gcong 'tshe ba med par mdzod/...(2a,1)*

*sgra yi rgyal po g.yu 'brug thog dbal can/*
*bdag gi dbang thang dbyar mtsho 'khyil bkang nas/*
*bsod nams srid la gnod pa med par mdzod/*

*gang gis 'gran med dung seng g.yu ral can/*
*bdag gi klung rta gangs ri ltar dkar nas/*
*las dang bsam par bar chad med par mdzod/....(2b,1)*

*rdzu 'phrul shig 'gros dbang rta sprin shugs can/*
*bdag gi bla dpal phun tshogs tshar (char) sprin phyug/*
*'ga'('gal) byed rlung gi(s)dengs pa med par mdzod/...*

50. For example, *ZJ*, Vol. Cha, chapter 28, ff.70b-71b; *Ju thig dpyad dón, passim.*
51. The painting which is reproduced here and which represents this divinity was already studied by Bacot (1931), Hummel (1953) and Stein (1981), but no one has yet identified the divinity.
For the present, we can at least identify the central figure whose iconography corresponds in certain respects to the description contained in the texts which we have found. Here are the relevant passages:
*seng ge'i mgo la dbyi yi sna/*
*'khro ba gdong la glang chen sna/*
*chu srin zhal la rgya stag mche/*
*ral gri rkang la chu gri gshog/*
*bya khyung dar ma'i rva dbal la/*
*yid bzhin nor bu'i dbu brnyan(rgyan) can/-*
"With a lion head and lynx ears,
A fearful face with an elephant's trunk,
A crocodile mouth with an Indian tiger's canine teeth,
Feet and wings in the form of swords,
A young garuda's horns,
Between the horns it holds a jewel"...
(*ZJ*, Vol. Kha, chapter 8, *sNang gshen theg pa'i mdo*, f.579; *cf.* also Snellgrove, 1967: 60-61).
As we see in the illustration, the central figure has no elephant's trunk. A similar description which does not mention the elephant's trunk either is also given by 'Ju Mi-pham rgya-mtsho in his *Ju thig dpyad don* (f.44b):
*'di mthu chen ver ma nyi nya yin/.....*
*seng ge'i mgo la dbyi yi sna/*
*ral gri'i rkang la chu gri'i gshog/*
*dgra sta ngar ma'i dbu rgyan can/*



Cang-seng and the Shugs-mgon.[52] Ye-mkhyen dgra-bla, the main warrior god of the Ye,[53] also acts as the god of clairvoyance in divination. Verma Nyi-nya is simply a warrior god, while Cang-seng and Shugs-mgon are regarded as gods of travel (*lam lha*). In fact, all these gods are generally classified as warrior gods in the *dGra bla dpang bstod* rituals.[54]

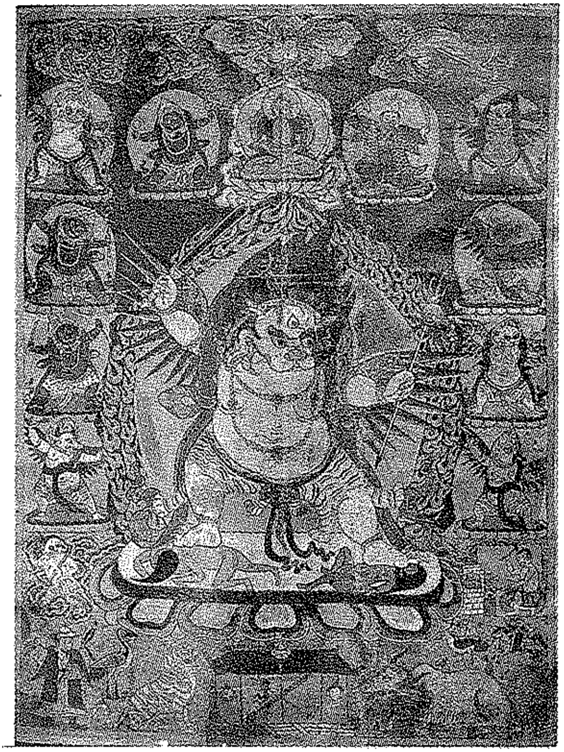


*Plate 28: Ver-ma Nyi-nya. Photo. Courtesy of Musec Guimet, Paris*

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*lo phrom bse yi slag pa can/*
*rgya stag rngam pa'i sham thabs can/*
*seng ge dkar mo'i sku stod la/*
*chu srin rngam pa'i sku smad can/*
*drag po dung gi ngar skad sgrogs/*
*gnam lcags tho lum phyag na bsnams/...*
*ver chen rnams kyi grol phug yin/*

52. On these deities, see Snellgrove, 1967: 50-57.
53. His proper name is dKyel Phu-ver dkar-po (*ZJ*, Vol.Cha, chapter 28, f.69a,2; *Ju thig dpyad don*, f.145a; Snellgrove, 1967: 24-25).
54. In our manuscript as in other Bonpo texts, one frequently finds the spelling *sgra bla*, a term which cannot easily be defined. In the early texts like the Dunhuang manuscripts, it is written as *dgra bla*, literally 'enemy-soul'. For the moment, we have used the translation 'warrior god' for *dgra lha* as the Tibetologists have done, *cf.* Stein, 1981: 195. Gibson (1985: 68), on theother hand, proposes 'sound-soul' or 'voice-spirit' for the term *sgra bla*.

The Ngam are seen as demons (*bdud*) eternally at war with the Ye. Their lord, Ngam-rje rTsol-po, and his armies represent the negative aspect of the world and human life (*med khams*), whereas Ye-rje sMon-pa represents the positive aspect of the world (*yod khams*). The mythical conflict between the Ye and the Ngam is quite complex and, to some extent, can be compared with the conflict opposing the Deva and the Asura in Hindu mythology. But its accounts are scattered among various texts, especially those devoted to divination, and needless to say, in popular rituals.

Another element in our text deserves special attention. The theme of dismemberment in creation myths exists in various cultures. This notion of 'creative dismemberment', which reflects the social strucure of a group is now well known due to A. W. Macdonald's research.[55] In our text, prince 'Thig-ge is invited for tea by each of his three sons, but he cannot decide whose invitation to accept first. Since he knows that his decision will inevitably provoke a bloody feud, he commits suicide. A fight over the dead body ensues. Each son eventually obtains a part of the body which confers on him a particular quality. Thus this myth presents the sharing of the father's body among three sons who represent three different ethnic groups. Although the division of the body here does not determine the social structure of one particular society, it nevertheless determines the characteristics of each society it engenders.

### The particular tradition that our text contains

As I previously mentioned, the classification of divine or demonic beings presented here, despite the lack of explanations, sheds light on the primogenitors in the creation and procreation myths. It also sheds light on the mythical conflict between the gNyan and the first four of the six brothers who founded the clans, and thereby provides further insight into the origin of the worship of the four semi-mythical animals in the *bsang mchod* rituals. The theme of dismemberment of the father's corpse cannot, to my knowledge, be found in any other Tibetan source available. This raises the question of whether the *dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags* represents a particular tradition or not, and leads to the problem of its authorship, date and context. Unfortunately, the colophon does not indicate the name of any real author; the composition is simply ascribed to King Khri Srong-lde-bstan (742-797). The only characters mentioned in this text whose dates can be ascertained are the renowned lotsā ba Mar-pa Chos-kyi blo-

55. Macdonald, 1975 and 1979.



gros (1012-1096)[56] and Kublai Khan (who ruled from 1260 to 1295).[57] The composition thus dates from after the mid-thirteenth century. We may also safely assume that the author, or rather the person who transcribed it from an oral tradition, was a Bonpo well-versed in Buddhist cosmogony. Moreover, his approach to Budhism is similar to that of the author of the *bShad mdzod*: he treats both religions on an equal footing.

In *ShDz*, the origin of the first Tibetan king is presented according to three different traditions, two of which are the *gSang ba chos lugs*, the 'Buddhist tradition that was hidden' and the *bsGrags pa bon lugs*, the 'Bonpo tradition that was proclaimed'.[58] According to the former, the first king came from India (*gsang ba chos lugs ltar na rgya nas chad/*). According to the latter, he came from heaven ([*bs*] *grags pa bon lugs ltar na lha nas chad/*).[59] Slight variations aside, the version presented as the *bsGrags pa bon lugs* is similar to the accounts in *RPS* and in our text, the name gNya'-khri btsan-po is simply replaced by Srid-pa sNe-phrom. The author of *ShDz* presents the *bsGrags pa bon lugs* and the *gSang ba chos lugs* as two opposing traditions, but provides no further explanation. On the other hand, *RPS, GG* and our text do not deal with the myth of the first king. As already mentioned, *ShDz* and *SG* [60] are concerned with the myth of the first king only, but in any event their accounts are identical. It is therefore quite probable that all these versions, which are basically identical, derive from a single source, possibly the *bsGrags pa bon lugs*. But we cannot reach any final conclusion until the (*rgyal rabs*) *bsGrags pa bon lugs* is brought to light.

The origin of the first king according to the historical tradition of the *bsGrags pa bon lugs* and the versions in the Dunhuang manuscripts (*PT* 1038,[61] 1286[62]) bear certain similarities. This further corroborates the fact that the version presented in the *bsGrags pa bon lugs* is not entirely a fabrication dating from after the tenth century.[63] Futhermore, in the *gSung bzhi bcu ba*, dBon-po Shes-rab 'byung-gnas quotes four verses from an unidentified Bonpo text (*bon gyi gzhung*) dealing with the first

56. *dmar (mar) pa chos kyi blo gros des/ rgya gar gyi dam chos bod la bsgyur/ (f.28b,7); chos la jo bo dpa' (mar) pa mkhas/* (f.33b,6).
57. *gya nag po ti shi'i khrim (khri) sgo de/ mang gho se che(n) rgyal po(s) bzung/* - "The capital of China was taken by the Mongol king, Se-chen". The term *ti shi* (Ti Shih), 'imperial preceptor' was the title which 'Phags-pa received from Kublai Khan, and therefore the term *ti shi* has no connection with *khri sgo* which simply designates the Chinese capital.
58. *ShDz*, pp.140-59.
59. *Ibid*, p.160.
60. *SG*, chapter 4.
61. Macdonald, Imaeda, 1979: Pl.312 (Macdonald, 1971: 214-19).
62. Macdonald, Imaeda, 1979: Pl. 555, III, VI.
63. On the problem of these historical traditions, see Article No. 17.

stage of procreation. He then says: *mthar sgong nga las skyes par 'dod pa* - "thus, they (the Bonpo) hold that (beings) were ultimately produced from an egg". This observation, along with the four quoted verses which I have compared with those found in our text, proves that this Buddhist author of the twelfth century knew a text that seems to be an exact rendition of ours.[64]

### The *dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags*

Our text is not entirely unknown to Western scholars. H. Hoffmann was the first to have translated a passage from it in his work on the religions of Tibet.[65] He himself revised this translation[66] which I have compared to ours in this article. Furthermore, R. A. Stein pointed out that the title *Mi'u 'dra chags* is mentioned in several texts devoted to the Gesar epic and he commented on the importance of this source if it turned out to be the *dBu mi'u 'dra chags.*[67] Indeed, this would mean that our text played an important role in the history of the clans as seen in the epic. This theme is the main concern of our text and it is important to remember that the hero of the epic, Gesar, is considered a descendant of the sMug-po lDong clan.

Given the obscurity of the language and the incoherence of the story, we are unable to give an integral translation of the text. The difficulty lies in that the text was apparently based on an oral tradition preserved in a dialect from Khams. Moreover, only one copy of the manuscript is available. I have therefore chosen to translate the second part of the text which happens to be the longest. It includes the mythical account on the origin of man and a number of new elements. It seemed therefore important to translate this part in full. I will nevertheless summarise the untranslated parts which also contain interesting elements.

I will first give the summaries of the prologue preceding the basic text and of the first part; they will be followed by the translation of the second part and a summary of the other untranslated parts of the text.

### The prologue

(1a) "The text first mentions that the work is devoted to two main subjects: the history of the 'world-receptacle' (*phyi snod*) and the origin (*grol phug*) of the beings of the 'world-essence' (*nang bcud*). The following three themes are presented:
1. The history of eternal Bon (*g.yung drung bon*).
2. The history of royal law (*rgyal khrims*).

64. *Cf.* note 79.
65. Hoffmann, 1961: 105-5.
66. Hoffmann, 1975: 107-8.
67. Stein, 1959a: 436-37, 460.



3. The history of individuals (*rang rang sgos*, i.e. the clans).
The text briefly evokes the first two them [illegible] ut the third is developed as follows:
*der dbu nag mi zhes pa 'di/*
*dang po byung ba'i phug btsun ste/*
*'od gsal lha'i gdung la(s) grol/*
*bar du srid pa'i rgyud 'phel ste/*
*phyva dmu gtsug gsum gnyan dang bzhi/*
*ye gnam gnyis dang drug du srid/*
*tha mar bcad pa'i sa bzung ste/*
*dbu nag mi'u gdung drug la/*
*kha khar rtsis na so sor che/*
*byas (gyes) pa stong...kun la yod/*
"First, the one called little black-headed man, (2a) is of good origin since he was produced by the race of luminous gods.
Secondly, these gods of the world procreated the lineage of the six categories of divine beings: the Phyva, the dMu, the gTsug, the gNyan, the Ye, and the Ngam.
Thirdly, they took possession of the earth which they divided among themselves.
If we count their descendants, they are innumerable. They multiplied by the millions and spread".

After this prologue, the text lists seven titles referring to the 'historical documents' of Tibet:
1. The *Srid pa gung spel:* the history of the sMug-po lDong.
2. The *sMug nag zil* po: the history of the Se-khyung dBra.
3. The *sTong dbra dmar:* the history of the Khri-zi 'Gru.
4. The *sKya bo mtha' pa:* the history of the dMu-tsha sGa.
5. The *Krims dang tshig gi yig nag:* the history of the dBal[68] and the lDa.
6. The *Ya msthan g.yu'i mchig gu:* the history of the ministers.
7. The *lCags kyi dra ba mgo nag:* the history of the Ngan-pa Shag.[69]

We cannot say much about these texts; more precisely, we do not know whether these titles refer to authentic or fictitious works. We do know, however, that texts concerning the history of certain important clans exist, for instance, *RPS* which claims to be the history of the dBra clan, one of the six mentioned above. In any event, the author of our text considers the seven titles as referring to actual texts. (2b) Moreover, our text is presented under five headings: the author, the object, the category,

68. Variant of dPa', dBa' and Zla, see Stein, 1959b: 66-70.
69. The Shag is probably a name of a tribe, but as such it remains unknown.

the sources and the résumé. The system of the five headings seems to be very ancient and is the framework in which a number of Dunhuang documents are written.[70]

1. The authors. Ten are indicated, but their names are not mentioned.
2. The purpose. The accounts were supposedly written for the benefit of future generations.
3. The category. Apparently they belong to the categories of 'human conventions' (*mi chos*)[71] and of 'royal law' (*rgyal khrims*).
4. The sources. It is said that the subjects stemmed from the *lHa rgyud* and the *'Dre rgyud*.[72]
5. The résumé (*dbu zhabs su bsdus pa*); in other words, the presentation of the main points of the story. There are ten points but only nine are mentioned (3a):
    1. The father, 'empty' from the beginning (*ye med stong pa'i pha*).
    2. The mother, 'empty' without form (*gzugs med stong pa'i ma*).
    3. The son, emanation of clairvoyance (*mngon shes sprul pa'i bu*).
    4. The hook to catch the wind (*rlung zer ma 'dzin pa'i shu zung*).
    5. The *Shag shig stong thun* (?).[73]
    6. The *rKan mar* of the powerful gods *Ver ma* (*mthu chen ver ma'i rkan mar*).[74]
    7. The *bu lud* to destroy heaven and earth (*gnam sa bshig pa'i bu lud*).[75]
    8. The oar to churn the ocean (*rgya mstho sgrug (dkrugs) pa'i skya ba*).
    9. The origin of little black-headed man (the text: *dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags*).
    10. (?)

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70. *Cf.* Stein, 1980-1981: 558-59.
71. On *mi chos*, see Stein, 1981: pp.144, 168-69, 225, 237, n.204; Snellgrove, Richardson, 1968: 108.
72. Certain texts with similar titles are extant in *NyG*: *lHa rgyud rin chen spungs pa* (Vol.Nga), *lHa 'dre stong gi dra ba'i rgyud* (Vol. Ya), but there is no connexion whatsoever between these texts and our text. On the term *lha 'dre* see Blondeau, 1971: 29.
73. The word *shag shig* is probaly of local dialect in Khams. It is not known to me. It designates an instrument like the hook of the No.4. The term *stong thun* has the sense of 'abridged' or 'abstract' of passages containing difficult points of an important and long work (*gzhung lugs kyi dka' gnad stong phrag du ma thun thun du bsdus pa...*), see Tshe-tan Zhabs-drung, *Dag yig thon mi'i dgongs rgyan*, New Delhi, 1969.
74. *rkan mar* is the butter which one gives to a new-born in the birth rite. *Cf. Ju thig dpyad don*, f. 114a; Stein, 1956: 57, 240.
75. According to the Dictionary by Jäschke, *pu lu* means 'hut' in Western Tibet, but that meaning does not correspond to the sense in our text. The *Ju thig dpyad don* (f.112a) reads: *gnam sa 'byed pa'i bu lu/* "the *bu lu* for separating the sky and earth". The sense of this word remains uncertain.



According to our text, these ten points form the 'summary'; that is to say, the last of the five headings (*dbu zhabs su bsdus pa la don rnam pa bcu yod/*). This is rather odd since there seems to be little connexion between the 'summary' and the ten points. Moreover, the title *dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags* is also the name of a song (*glu*). Could all ten headings refer to songs?

The headings are followed by what seems to be a table of contents for the main text:

1. Cosmogonic history (*phyi snod 'jig rten gyi chags lugs*).
2. The origin of beings (*nang bcud sems can gyi grol thabs*).
3. Geographical location of Tibet (*bod kyi 'dug lugs*).
4. Enumeration and the geography of foreign countries (*bod min pa rnams kyi che rtsis*).
5. The sharing of the earth (*sa byi (phye) ma gser gyi bgos 'bod [bab]*).
6. The origin of the little black-headed man (*dbu nag mi'u 'dra chags*).

But these headings are also the titles of songs sung by bards. The author says: *glu de drug shes na mkhas pa yin/-* "if one can sing all six songs, then one is indeed well-learned". The songs are preceded by two lines which are characteristic of the mythical narratives in Bonpo rituals:

*yod ni yod na gang du yod/*
*srid ni bsrid na gang du bsrid (srid)/-*
"This existence, if there is one, where does it exist?
This creation, if it was created, where was it created?"

The title *dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags* is therefore the title of the last part of the text and that of the text as a whole.

**The first part**

This part of the text deals with the presentation of the creation of the 'receptacle-world' was evidently borrowed from the Buddhist concept of cosmogony. Mount Sumeru dominates the four continents. Only in that of Jambudvīpa can religions such as Bon and Buddhism be found, as well as songs, medicine, arts, divination, and the following traditions:

*pha la bab pa'i bu khyim yod/*
*bu la bab pa'i pha shid yod/*
*dgra byung rta rtod zer ba yod/*
*gnyen byung lug shos zer ba yod/*
"That which falls to the father is the responsibility of having children and a household;

That which falls to the son is the responsibility of his father's funeral.
It is said that one must tether one's horse when the enemy appears.
It is said that one must kill a sheep when a relative appears"

The continent of Jambudvīpa comprises many countries including sTag-zig (Tazig), the land of Bon. In this country, there is the palace of rGya-mkhar Bar-po so-brgyad, the birth place of gShen-rab Mi-bo, and the sacred mountain g.Yung-drung dgu-brtsegs, the place where Bon is practised; India, where the birth place of the Buddha and rDo-rje-gdan (Vajrāsana), the place of His Enlightenment, are located. Then there is Tibet where one finds Mount Ti-se (Kailash), the centre of the universe, and the turquoise lake Ma-pang (Manasarowar), the source (*grol phug*) of the four rivers. Then follows a fairly elaborate description of Tibet: the three provinces of mNga'-ris in the west, the four provinces of Ru in the centre, and mDo-gam in the east. In our text, the latter consists of three Shog (wings), six rivers and five sGang (mountain ranges) instead of the four rivers and the six mountain chains generally mentioned. The mDo-gam is divided into two provinces: mDo-stod (Khams) and mDo-smad (Amdo).

**Translation of the second part of the text (13a-22b). The account of creation and procreation.**

I (13a) The birth of beings (took place as follows):
First there was nothing. All was emptiness.
Within this emptiness, life gradually began to form.[76]
Within this life, light and a ray appeared.
Light is the father and the ray is the mother.
Within the light and the ray darkness and obscurity became manifest.[77]
Within them a soft breeze like breath appeared.
Then within this breeze, a whitish frost,[78]
And within this frost a whitish dew,[79]

76. The verb *srid* or *srid pa* has the connotation of to form, to appear, to be born, to procreate, to beget, to engender, to generate, to become or to be created. *Cf.* Stein, 1973: 416-17.
77. In his translation of this entire passage, H. Hoffmann (1975: 107) has not noticed the importance of the two terms: *smrag* and *smrig*. The word *smrag* has certainly the sense of darkness and is often combined with *rum: smrag rum* 'total darkness'. As for the word *smrig*, it is another spelling of *smig* 'obscurity' as in *smig rgyu* 'mirage'.
78. Hoffmann (1975:107) translates the word *ba mo skya* by 'dull frost'.
79. Hoffmann (1975: 107) translates the word *zil ba phrom* by 'glittering dew'. However, the word *phrom* has the connotation of 'white': *skya phrom phrom = ko sogs mdog*, 'colour of hide, etc.', understood as 'white'. Moreover, the word *phrum* designates: *dar ba'am zho*, 'curds' or 'yogurt' (*PS*, 1960, f.40b). There are other examples for *phrom* with meaning white in our text: Thug-mo phrom-phrom, name of a white ewe; 'Bri-mo phrom-phrom, name of a white *'bri*, the female yak. In fact, we find the spelling *phrum* in the same passage quoted in the *gSung bzhi bcu ba* (p.292): *dang po ye med stong pa las/ de nas ye yod cung tsam srid/ de nas ba mo skya tsam srid/ de nas zil ba phrum tsam srid/*



From the union of the frost and the dew,
A lake, like a mirror, emerged.

A layer formed on the lake and rolled itself into an egg. Out of this egg, two eagles emerged, one white and the other black. (The white eagle) became the 'Luminous Appearance' (sNang-ba 'od-ldan), and (the black eagle) became the "Dark Ray" (Mun-pa zer-ldan). The union of these two eagles produced three eggs: one white, one black and one multi-coloured. The white egg burst. Its shell became a white boulder.

Its membrane produced (the god) 'Od-kyi khri-lde. The white of the egg became the (goddess) mDzo-mo dkar-mo. From the centre of the egg (the yolk) emerged three gods: Srid-lha 'Od-dkar, Cang-shes Mi-mgon dkar-po and Dung-gi mig-ldan dkar-po. The black egg burst. Two (black men) emerged: Ngam-mi nag-po and Tril-nag dpung-bkra. The multi-coloured egg burst. A being named sMon lam-lam lum-lum emerged.

This being had no eyes to see, no ears to hear, no nose to smell, no tongue to taste, (14a) no hands to grasp, no legs to walk. He only posessed a mind to think. Then appeared eyes to see, ears to hear, a nose to smell, a tongue to taste, hands to grasp, feet to walk. He named himself Srid-pa Sangs-po 'bum-khri. He is equally called Ye-smon rgyal-po, the 'King of the Primeval Wish'.

(Then) Srid-pa Ye-smon rgyal-po, placing gold and turquoise on his right, made a wish whereupon a golden mountain and a valley of turquoise appeared: all the Phyva lineages descend from there. Placing a conch shell and the stone *mchong* on his left, he made a wish whereupon a mountain of conch and a valley of *mchong* appeared: all the dMu lineages descend from there. Placing crystal and bronze before him, he made a wish whereupon a crystal rock and a glittering lake appeared: all the lineages of the gTsug descend from there. All categories of the Klu, sBru-ru rog-po, Tshag-pa hag-skyug, Srin-bu ra-slag belong to the gTsug lineage. The lineage of the dMu (14b) engendered the Bon of the Buddhas. The Phyva lineage engendered the black-headed men. The gTsug lineage engendered the animals.

To the left, in the valley of *mchong*, near the conch mountain, a son of the dMu, 'Phrul-bu dBang-ldan, and a daughter of the gNyan, dKar-mo, appeared; having transformed themselves into vultures, they coupled

and begot the king of sTag-gzig and the Dharma king of India; then having changed into tigers, they coupled and begot (the kings) of Li (Khotan), Bal-po (Nepal), Phrom and Tazig (Iran); having changed into horses, they coupled and begot (the horse) mTshe'u bya-tsha of the sGo;[80] having changed into yaks, they coupled and begot (the yak) sPu-g.yag gnyan-dkar of the sGo; having changed into sheep, they begot (the sheep) Thug-mo phrom-phrom. Thus the dMu lineage was engendered.

One of the Phyva sons, sPyi-gtsug rgyal-ba married one of the Dung daughters, rNgu-mo. They begot sTag-cha 'al-'ol of the Phyva race. sTag-cha 'al-'ol married a 'Tsham woman, Khyad-khyud-ma. (15a) They had four sons of the Phyva race:

1. The Phyva god Bram-shing[81] whose lineage was interrupted since he broke his pledge.
2. (The god) 'O-lde gung-rgyal who is the ancestor of all the mountain deities.
3. The lord of the Phyva, Ya-bla bdal-drug.
4. [82]

Ya-bla bdal-drug married the goddess Thang and begot nine white Thugs; he married a Srin woman and begot nine red Thugs; he married a gNyan woman and begot (nine black Thugs), the nephews of the gNyan; he married a dMu woman and begot the ten nephews of the dMu. The lord of the Phyva, Ya-bla bdal-drug had thirty-seven children...[83]

The youngest of the thirty-seven children is Srid-pa sNe-phrom la-khra. He was sent from heaven by his father to establish the human race. He gradually descended the thirteen levels of heaven onto Sa-ga dog-drug, the earth, and using the nine steps of the dMu ladder, he descended onto the summit of a mountain with the shape of a helmet. There he saw a Phyva woman weaving. He sat at the head of her loom and the woman asked him: "A man has arrived in this country without men. Whence did you come this morning? Whither will you go this evening?" Srid-pa sNe-phrom replied: "The lord of the Phyva, Ya-bla bdal-drug has thirty-seven sons and I am the youngest. My father sent me from heaven to establish the lineage of man".

A demon saw the god from afar and wanted to take him away. So the woman made the effigy of a monkey out of a piece of cloth and hid the god. The demon asked her: "Where has the man who was sitting by the loom gone?" She replied: "I have seen no one but this monkey". Taking the monkey with him, the demon descended but his 'bearded' dog did not want to leave (with his master). The woman then pulled out her shuttle, hit the dog on the mouth and broke his teeth. She then hit him on the eyes and blinded (16b) him. The dog howled with pain and fled downwards. The (custom of) offering a monkey as a substitute for man thus originated.[84] The woman said (to the god): "I, woman, was good to you. Now man, it is your turn to show kindness. We must give birth to our emanations".

II. From their union, 'Thing-po, 'Thing-mig and 'Thing-ge were born. 'Thing-po died from water. 'Thing-mig died from fire. (Their mother) the Phyva lady was pierced by a *bdud* arrow. Srid-pa rgyal-bu 'Thing-ge married (several women): a Phyva woman (dKar-mo) and they conceived 'Dzom-la-phrom, Tibet. He married a dMu woman and they begot Khri-la-bzhes, China. He married a Khri woman and begot Khri-brug Hor.[85] He married dByig-sna-ma and they gave birth to 'Bo, 'Jang and Li. He married a gNyan woman and they had four sons: the monkey, the badger, the brown bear and (the fourth is missing). They are non-human but similar to man.

One day, Prince 'Thig-ge was in rMa-kha bzhur-gyi gong-kha 'Dzom-la-phrom (Tibet) said to him: "Come for tea, father!" Khri-la bzhes (China) and Khri-phrug (Hor) also said: "Come for tea, father!" (17a) The father knew that no matter whose invitation he accepted first, his sons would quarrel, so he said: "Run yonder and I will come to the one who is the quickest". 'Dzom-la-phrom was the quickest of the three. He returned and said to his father: "Now come and have tea!". But the father had strangled himself with his boot lace.

So 'Dzom-la phrom said: "When he was alive, I cared for him. Therefore his body is mine". The other two brothers also claimed that the body was theirs. A bloody feud almost broke out. Then gShen-lha 'Od-

80. Name of a clan, described as 'maternal uncle' (*zhang po* sGo), but the sources do not explain how the sGo came to be attributed this parental degree. Moreover, in our text the sGo are not the maternal uncle of the six brothers. *Cf.* Stein, 1959b: 20-22.

81. Variant of Tsha (Phyva) Grang-shing dkar-po (*RPS*, p.5); Phyva-bla Bram-sprin (*mKha' klong gsang mdos*, Delhi, 1973, p.238); Cha-la (Phyva-lha) dGra-chen (*ShDz*, p.150) et Cha (Phyva)-lha Brang-chen ou Phya (Phyva)-lha Bram-chen (*Dam can bstan srung rgya mtsho'i rnam par thar pa cha shas tsam brjod pa sngon med legs bshad* by Sle-lung bZhad-pa'i rdo-rje(b.1696), Thimphu, 1976, p.336).

82. Here the name is missing in our text, but it is Khri-sde gsum-po (*RPS*, p.5); rGya-lha 'Gros-ma (*ShDz*, p.150) and rGyal-lha 'Brong-rnam (*Dam can bstan srung*...by Sle-lung, references for this last work, see note 81).

83. There is great confusion concerning the number of women and children of Ya-bla bdal-drug. *RPS* gives 27 and then states that there were 35 offspring (pp.5-6).

84. This is an allusion to the notion of *glud* on which see Article No.20.

85. This myth presents 'Dzom-la-phrom, Khri-la-bzhes and Khri-phrug respectively as the first man in Tibet, China and Hor (Hor here stands for Mongolia). For this reason, 'Dzom-la-phrom is simply called Bod, Khri-la-bzhes, rGya and Khri-phrug, Hor. In the same manner in the passage which follows, 'Thing-ge with his wife dByig-sna-ma have three children, each of whom repesents a country: 'Bo(?), 'Jang and Li.

dkar,[86] the god of the three thousand realms, whose abode lies beyond the three thousand realms, was invited. gShen-rab Mi-bo, the master of the three realms, whose abode lies beyond the three realms was invited. sTag-la yar-bzhugs,[87] the Bonpo of the gods was summoned from his palace dBal-ri zur-gsum. All three said: 'The spirit of your father[88] must be shared out according to the archetypal exposition.[89] The body, too, must be shared (among the three brothers). We will proceed by striking it with 'swan wings'. The upper body with the head formed one part. The middle body on which the thumbs had been placed formed another part. The lower body on which the heart had been placed formed the third part. (17b) 'Dzom-la-phrom, the king of sPu, was given first choice. He thought to himself: "the main part of the body is the head" and chose the upper part. He invited gShen-rab Mi-bo before the *stūpa* of Svayambhu and incinerated (his share of the body) in a cane and bamboo fire. He poured pear and grape syrup over it. He placed feathers on the head of a splendid horse. The horse and sheep were presented as (sacrificial) offerings. The Tibetan tradition of incinerating the father's body and of offering a horse and sheep was thus established.[90]

Khri-phrug obtained the middle part of the corpse with the thumbs. He buried the body in the sand in the moon valley of Zla-bkra and kept the thumbs. This is how the Hor tradition of throwing the father's corpse in a ditch originated and how, because of the thumbs, the Hor acquired their great skill at archery.

86. On this deity, see Article No. 8, p. 133.
87. This sage is often known under the name of sTag-la me-'bar, see *LShDz* (Karmay, 1972: 45, n.2).
88. The word *mtshun* has the connotation of 'spirits of the dead' and *pha mtshun* therefore means 'ancestral spirit' which is represented by the heart (*mtshun snying*) in the myth, see below. In the present context, it is the heart of the father, the prince 'Thing-ge. To illustrate this notion, let us cite a passage from a text entitled *bSad pa las drug*, a section from a collection of Bonpo ritual texts (lithographic edition, anonymous and undated, f. 628):

*mtshun mgon gnyan la skyabs ma tshol/*
*mtshun mgon gnyan la skyabs tshol na/*
*mtshun snying dug gi(s) mnol bar byas/*
*de bas mtshun mgon gnyan dang phyes/*

"Do not let him look for protection of the gNyan,
protectors of the spirits of the dead,
If he looks for protection,
His heart should be polluted by poison (if the heart is poisoned,
the Nyan cannot protect it),
He must therefore be separated from the gNyan."

89. For other contexts in which the term *smrang* occurs, see note 5.
90. The horse and sheep also play an important role in the funeral rites in ancient times. *Cf.* Stein 1971: 484, n.13.



Khri-la-bzhes obtained the lower part and the heart. In Ra-rgya gru-so in Khams, he threw the body into the river and kept the heart. The (Chinese) tradition of throwing the father's body into water thus came to be. For this reason, the Chinese are filled with greed and their population greatly increases.

Over three generations the Chinese population had grown while the Tibetan population remained stable. So the three Bonpo encountered above were summoned. They performed the blue *Ju thig* divination using the blue threads of wool from the sacred sheep. The divination fell on the white square. 'Dzom-la-phrom asked: "Why has the Chinese population grown in three generations while the Tibetan population stagnates?" The divination indicated number fifteen to the left. So, 'Dzom-la-phrom asked: "What must be done in order to remedy the stagnation (of Tibet's population)?". The three Bonpo replied: "It seems that the 'spirit' of your father has gone to China. There is a way of regaining it. This will put an end to the stagnation of Tibet's population".

'Dzom-la-phrom wondered: "If I give a great quantity of wealth, will I be able to purchase it? If I try to steal it, will I succeed?" He set off with many precious objects: a gold Buddha (statue), a silver (image of) sTon-pa gShen-rab Mi-bo, and a turquoise (image of) sNang-ba 'od-ldan, a robe made of nine skins; a necklace of pearls nine cubits long; a dress made of dragon skin; the talon of a *garuḍa;* (18b); a *bu lud*[91] that can destroy heaven and earth; the charcoal head of a horse without a single crack. It is said that there were other objects of great value belonging to his father. He took them with him to China.

He showed them to the Chinese dBang-po-che[92] and said: "We three, China, Tibet and Hor have the same father. When we shared the corpse, you obtained our father's heart. Show it to me. I am sad and need to be comforted. I want to make fumigation offerings to him. I have many goods that father left behind and I will give you some of them". dBang-po-che said: "We are brothers abandoned by our father. Indeed we shared our father's corpse and so we should also share his wealth which he left for us. But a valley divided by a river has a sunny side and a shady side. So I will not show our father's heart to you". Again 'Dzom-la-phrom went to dBang-po-chung and asked: "Show me our father's heart!" dBang-po-chung replied: "China, Tibet and Hor divided the corpse of their father among themselves. I will not show it to you!" So 'Dzom-la-phrom said: "I have precious objects left by our father, such as the gold Buddha etc". dBang-po-chung laughed: "He he", and said: "Our father's heart lies

91. See note 75.
92. Until now, we have the name Khri-la-bzhes or just simply rGya, but from now it is replaced by two names: first dBang-po-che and later dByang-po-chung. No reason is given in out text for these changes.

on the top of a castle, Vulture Rock, inside a wall of the roof, behind a silk curtain. Salute it, circumambulate it three times and make fumigation offerings". 'Dzom-la-phrom was happy and laughed: "He he". dBang-po-chung made him go naked but 'Dzom-la-phrom, anticipating this request, had placed an old heart of sheep under his (left) armpit. He took his father's heart and replaced it with the sheep's heart. The very same night, dBang-po-chung's wife, Lung-chung, a Cog-ro woman, had a bad dream. (She asked): "Have you not let your father's heart escape to your brother?" So the husband went to look at the heart. The following night, his wife had an even worse dream. She dreamt that a great mountain had collapsed, that a great lake had dried out to its very depths, that a great tree had split in half. She thus told her husband: "Run after your brother!" So he set off and caught up with his brother on the border between China and Tibet. He said: "I allowed you to seek comfort near our father's heart, (19b) but it seems you have taken it. Put it back in its place before you leave". ('Dzom-la-phrom replied): "First, let us cross the river-border between China and Tibet and then talk". He quickly crossed the bridge. When he reached the other side he threw the bridge into the water and sang (the following song):

"In rMa-kha bzhur-gyi gong-kha,
The old father of China, Tibet and Hor died.
In Nyin-gyi gad-dmar,
We three brothers shared our father's body.
At the foot of the *stūpa* Svayambhu,
I, 'Dzom-la-phrom, incinerated our father's corpse.
In the moon valley Zla-bkra,
Khri-phrug hid our father's body in a ditch.
In Ra-rgya gru-so in Khams,
You threw our father's body into the river.
On the summit of the castle Vulture Rock,
I won the heart of our father.
You, Khri-la-bzhes, do not have the power (to prevent me);
I, 'Dzom-la-phrom, did not dare prevent you either".

So Khri-la-bzhes descended, crying. 'Dzom-la-phrom ascended to his abode, laughing. (20a) He invited the three *lha bon* (mentioned above) and during nine days they performed (for the father's spirit) the 'purification ritual for below' (*mar sel*). During thirteen days they performed the 'purification ritual for above' (*yar sel*). The thirteen 'citadels' (*gsas mkhar*) were restored. The stagnation of Tibet's population ceased.

III. 'Dzom-la-phrom, had a son, Khri-tho chen-po, who married a gNyan woman, dKar-mo. They had three sons: lDong, dBra and 'Gru.



Then (Khri-tho chen-po) married a dMu woman and they had one son, dMu-tsha sGa. (Finally) Khri-tho chen-po married a Srin woman, Go-zur-can. They had two sons: dBal, the oldest and lDa, the youngest. Hence Tibet is known as the 'Three Mothers and the Six Sons' (*bod ma gsum bu drug*).

The father is Khri-tho chen-po.
He dwells in the centre of lHa-ri gZhur-po
with his two white *mdzo mo*.
He milks them morn and eve and fills two bowls with milk each time;
He cares for them well.
(One day) seven horsemen, *bdud* bandits, appeared. (20b)
They drove away the two *mdzo mo*.
The father pursued the bandits and
Reached Gling-phug ga-mar.
But at the same moment, his wife dKar-mo, a gNyan, was afraid that her husband would be killed by the bDud.
So she changed into a white frog.
When her husband went to the right, she prevented him from the right.
When her husband went to the left, she prevented him from the left.
In the end she prevented him from moving at all.
So he became angry,
Suddenly he pulled out his sword and
struck her waist;
The frog cried out three times.
The old gNyan De-ba heard her.
He thought his daughter had been killed by her husband.
He pulled out his fatal arrow,
and killed the father Khri-tho chen-po.
The father of the 'Six Clans of Tibet' had just been killed by the gNyan.
Vengeance was declared against the black bDud.
The 'Six Clans of Tibet' said:
"We will seek vengeance for this murder on the bDud.
We will demand compensation (for the murder) from the gNyan."
At that moment, (21a)
sPyi-gtsug rgyal-ba, son of the Phyva,
offered to be a mediator between man and the gNyan.
(He said): "Now, you, the gNyan, owe them compensation for the murder of
the father of the 'six clans'.

So in compensation:
The gNyan gave lDong-lha rMa-phrom to the lDong clan.
It was a dragon with a copper crest.
He resided on the summit of the invisible vault of heaven.
He pledged to be the god of the wealthy lDong warriors.

The gNyan gave dBra-mo dbra-bkra to the dBra clan.
It was a Khyung bird, with an iron beak and claws.
He soared the skies, amid the snowy mountain peaks.
He pledged to be the warrior god of the noble dBra clan.

The gNyan gave 'Bri-mo phrom-phrom to the 'Gru clan.
She was a sacred female yak with sharp horns.
She wandered among the 'Gru and around the mountains.
She pledged to be the warrior goddess of the 'Gru clan.

The gNyan gave the god sKar-ma legs-po to the sGa clan.
He was a golden tiger with red stripes.
He wandered among the sGa and the three realms.
He was the warrior god of the sGa clan.

To the dBal and the lDa, (21b)
The gNyan gave respectively a brown ram and a white dog.
(But the six clans) were not satisfied with these meagre compensations.
They said: "We have obtained compensation from the gNyan,
But when will we wreak vengeance on the bDud?"
Each of the first four clans among the six bought a horse.
The lDong bought gSal-ba yang-'do from China.
He set out with the intention of seeking vengeance on the dBud.
But returned after having seen the tip of the bDud banner.
All knew that he had returned (without having accomplished anything).
The dBra bought a horse, gSang-rje yag-pa from the sGo.
He set out with the intention of seeking vengeance on the bDud.
But returned after having heard the howling of the bDud dog.
All knew that he had returned (without having accomplished anything)
The sGa bought the horse dMar-nya nyal-po from 'Jang.
He set out to seek vengeance on the dBud.
But he returned after having seen the smoke of the bDud.
All knew that he had returned (without having accomplished anything)



The 'Gru bought the horse Tril-rje yag-pa from the Hor.
He took the great gold stick in his hands.
He hit the ground three times with the staff bearing a serpent's head - which belonged to the gNyan.
When he reached the Kun-snang pass in the east,
The bDud army suddenly appeared.
The 'Gru, with the help of the gods,(22a)
Took the castle of Phye-ra phyed-rdzong.
The black man, Dus-chen of the bDud was killed.
The lord of the bDud, Khyab-pa lag-ring,[93] was taken prisoner.
The children of the bDud were smashed against the rocks.
Those who obtained ale (*chang*) from the bDud
(Thus) obtained the nectar of rejuvenation.
The *chang* of the bDud was intended for warriors
The black flag of the bDud was destined to the warriors of A-lcag 'Gru.
Hence the expression *dpa' dar*, the 'flag of the warrior'.
The white tiger's head, the bDud dog, was offered to the lDong as a 'prime gift of shame'.
Hence the expression *mnong phud*, the 'prime gift of shame'.
The black dDud's saddle was offered to the dBra as ....(one line is missing in the manuscript)
... as food to the Se-khyung dBra warriors.
Hence the expression: *dpa' zas*, the 'food of heroes'.
The skin of the White Tiger's right flank
was used to decorate the quiver of the 'Gru lord, lHa-dbang thod-dkar.
Hence the expression *stag ral* the 'tiger-skin quiver' for the young man.
From the skin of the White Tiger's left flank
a prime head-dress was made for the 'Gru lady Zang-yag-ma.
Hence the expession *stag phud* for the women... (22b)
Thus vengeance was taken on the bDud.

**The third and fourth parts (23a-24a).**

The text returns briefly to the subject of culture and geography of Tibet, India, China, Hor, Sog-po and 'Jang.

**The fifth part (24a-26a).**

The six categories of divine beings mentioned above (*srid pa skos drug*) are listed, but here the gNyan are replaced by the sGo. The text

93. In the hagiography of gShen-rab Mi-bo, this personage is depicted as a great rival of the master and plays a similar role in Gesar epic.

states that the Phyva are the oldest and the dMu the most numerous (*snga ba phyva snga/ mang ba dmu mang/*); but nothing about the other members is mentioned. With regard to the primitive clans of Tibet, seven (*bod spun bdun*) were created by the four eldest: the lDong, the dBra, the 'Gru and the sGo; by the two youngest: the dBal and the lDal; and by the uncle sGol-lha sDe-sde dkar-po. The 'six clans' produced by the three mothers (*ma gsum bu drug*) shared the country among themselves (*bod ma gsum bu drug sa bgos byas/*), but the two youngest did not receive any part so they set out to the eastern border where they established their strongholds.

The author then mentions several texts such as the *Srid pa skos drug gi skos thabs* (the way in which the six delegates were designated), the *gDung drug mi'u 'byung khungs* (the origin of the six clans of little man), the *Mi bu rus drug gi zhib rtsis* (the detailed enumeration of the six clans), and the *Bod bu spun gyi rus rtsis* (the counting of the Tibetans clans).

The last three titles are almost identical and probably refer to the same subject, that is to say, the account of the six clans. The author also mentions the *gNyen tsho spun bzhi'i che rtsis* (the great exposition of the four related brothers) and the *Zhang po sgo'i gnyen rtsis* (the pedigree of the sGo uncle).

**The sixth part (26a-35a)**

The author then gives a fairly detailed description of the lineage of each of the four clans (the lDong, the dBra, the 'Gru and the sGa), of their location and the manner in which their descendants multiplied. This account is followed by another passage devoted to the geography of Tibet (33b-34b). The text then ends with the following colophon (37b, 7): *rgyal po khri bsrung (srong) sde (lde) btsun (btsan) gyis dpon blon bcu gnyis kyis (kyi) che ba dang/ gling bzhi'i chags lugs dang/ phyi rab(s) kyis (kyi) sems can ma go ba rnams la bston (ston) ba'i (pa'i) chad (ched) du/ bod kyis (kyi) mi'u 'dra chags bston (ston) pa rdzogs sho/*-"The king Khri Srong-lde-btsan composed (this treatise entitled) the origin of the little man of Tibet, devoted to the greatness of the twelve ministers and to the history of the four continents, so that future beings may have knowledge of this history".

**Transliteration of the translated part of the Tibetan text**

(13a) de na (nang) bcud sems can grol thob (thabs) de/
dang po ye med stong pa la/
de la ye yod cung tsam srid/
de la 'od dang zer du srid/
'od ni pha la zer ni ma/



de la smrag dang srmig du (tu) srid/
de la ser bu nged (ngad) tsam srid/
de la ba mo skya tsam srid/
de la zil ba phrum (phrom) tsam srid/
ba mo (13b) dang zil ba sdebs (bsdebs) pa la/
mtsho me long tsam cig (zhig) de la srid/

de la zhags su chag (chags)/ sgong du tril ('dril)/ sgong nga rtol (rdol) ba'i nang shid (shed) na/ bya blar (glag) dkar nag gnyis su srid pa la/ snang ba 'od ldan dang/ mun pa zer ldan gnyis srid/ snang mun gnyis po bsdebs pa la/ sgong nga dkar nag khra gsum srid/ sgong nga dkar po rdol ba la/

phyi'i shun pa la lha brag dkar po srid/ bar gyi bdar sha la 'od kyi khri lde srid/ nang gi sgong chu la/ dung gi mdzo mo dkar mo srid/ sgong nga de'i nang shad (shed) nas/ lha rab srid lha 'od dkar dang lha cang shes mi mgon dkar po dang dung gi mi (mig) ldan dkar po gsum srid/

sgong nga nag po rdol ba la/ ngam mi nag po dang tril nag dpung bkra gnyis srid/

sgong nga khra bo rdol ba la/ smon lam mi lam lam lum lum srid/ de la lta ba'i mig med/ nyan pa'i rna ba med/ snom pa'i sna med/ myang (myong) ba'i lce med/ rnyob (14a) pa'i lag pa med/ 'gro ba'i rkang pa med/ bsam pa'i yid rgyu ba tsam cig (zhig) yod pa la/ lta ba'i mig dod/ nyan pa'i rna ba dod/ snom pa'i sna dod/ myong ba'i lce dod/ rnyob pa'i lag pa dod/ 'gro ba'i rkang pa dod/ de la rang ming rang gis btag (btags) pa la/ srid pa sangs po 'bum khri btags/ srid pa sangs po 'bum khri la/ ye smon rgyal po zhes kyang bya/

srid pa ye smon rgyal po des/ g.yas su gser dang g.yu bzhag nas smon lam btab (btabs) pas/ gser ri g.yu lung gnyis su srdi/ phya (phyva) rgyud (brgyud) thams cad de la (las) grol/ g.yon du dung dang mchong bzhag nas smon lam btabs pas/ dung ri mchong lung gnyis su srid/ dmu brgyud thams cad de las grol/ thad du shel dang rag 'od bzhag nas smon lam btabs pas/ shel brag dang 'od mtsho gnyis su srid/ gtsugs (gtsug) brgyud thams cad de la (las) grol/ sbu ru rog po/ tshag pa hag skyug/ srin bu ra slag/ klu rig (rigs) thams cad gtsug brgyud yin/ dmu (14b) brgyud sangs rgyas bon la grub/ phya (phyva) brgyud thams cad dbu nag mi la grub/ gtsug brgyud thams cad byol song phyugs la grub/

g.yon gyi dung ri mchong lung na/ dmu sras 'phrul bu dbang ldan dang/ gnyan lcam dkar mo gnyis su srid/ bya rgod du sprul nas bsdebs pa la/ stag gzig bon gyi rgyal po dang/ rgya gar chos kyi rgyal po gnyis su srid/ stag dang (tu) sprul nas bsdebs la/ mi (li) dang bal po phrom dang gsum/ da (ta) zig nor gyi rgyal po dang bzhi srid/ rta ru sprul nas bsdebs pa la/ sgo'i mtshe'u bya tsha srid/ g.yag dang (tu) sprul nas bsdebs pa la/

sgo'i spu g.yag gnyan dkar srid/ lug dang (tu) sprul nas bsdebs pa la/ sgo'i thug mo phrom phrom srid/ dmu brgyud thams cad grol thabs lags/

phya (phyva) bu spyi gtsug rgyal ba des/ dung za rngu mo khabs su (khab tu) bzhes pa la/ phya (phyva) rab stag cha 'al 'ol srid/ phyva rab stag cha 'al 'ol des/ 'tsham za bya khyung (khyad khyud) ma khab tu bzhes pa la/ phyva rab (15a) mched bzhi srid/ phyva bla bram shing mna' zos pas rgyun (brgyud) chad/ 'od ('o) de gung rgyal las/ yul lha'i lha tshogs grol ba yin/ phyva rje ya bla bdal drug de/ lha mo thang dang bsdebs pa la/ thugs dkar bu dgu srid/ srin mo dang bsdebs pa la/ thugs dmar bu dgu srid/ gnyan mo dang bsdebs pa la/ gnyan tsha lhang lhang (sogs thugs nag bu dgu) srid/ dmu mo dang bsdebs pa la/ dmu tsha bcu gnyis (bcu) srid/ phyva rje ya bal bdal drug la sras bu sum cu so bdun yod/ (15a,4)

(15b,6) so bdun pa'i chung ba de/ srid pa sne phrom la khra yin/ yab kyis dgung nas mi brgyud spel ba btong ba la/ rgung (dgung) rim pa bcu gsum mar 'das 'ong/ sa ga dog drug du (tu) phyin nas/ dmu (16a) skas them dgu them par/ ri rmog phor tsam gyi mgo la bab (babs)/ der bud med mdong (mdangs) ldan pa cig thag 'thag cing snang ba'i thag 'gor bsdad pa la/ bud med de'i zhal na re/ 'dir mi med yul na mi cig phyin/ da nang gang gi yul na (nas) 'ong/ do nub su'i can du 'gro/ de la srid pa sne phrom la khra'i zhal nas/ phyva rje ya bla bdal drug la/ sras bu sum cu so bdun yod pa la/ nga chung ba sne phrom la khra yin/ yab kyi(s) rgung (dgung) nas mi brgyud spel ba la btang pa yin byas tsa/ srin po(s) mthong nas rkus nas (rku bar byung)/ bud med des thag de'i snan zan de la/ sprel gcig byas nas kho bskung nas bzhag/ srin po des khyod kyi thag gho ('go'i) mi de gar thal zer ba la/ bud med des nges (ngas) sprel 'dhi ('di) bas ma mthong zer/ srin pos sprel de khyer nas thur la thal/ srin khyi rgya bo 'gro ma nyan/ bud med thag zang trang (drangs) nas/ srin khyi'i kha la brgyab nas so bcag/ mig (16b) la brgyab nas mig bcar/ mkhong cing ('khang zhing) thur du thar/ mi glud sprel du gtong ba de nas srid/ bud med de'i zhal na re/ nga mo trin (drin) pho la che ba yin/ khyod pho drin mo la da che rgos (dgos)/ yu pa (bu) gnyis sprul pa sdeb dgos zer/

sprul pa bsdebs pa la/'thing po/ 'thing mig/ 'thing ge gsum srid/ 'thing po chu dri (gris) shi/ 'thing mig me tri (gris) shi/ phyva lcam la bdud mda' phog/ srid pa rgyal bu 'thing ge des/ phyva lcam zhig khab du bzhes pa la/ bod 'dzom la phrom srid/ dmu za khri ma dang bsdebs pa la/ rgya khri la bzhes srid/ khri mo dang bsdebs pa la/ khri phrug hor srid/ dbyig sna ma dang bsdebs pa la/ 'bo dang 'jong ('jang) mi (li) dang gsum srid/ gnyan mo dang bsdebs pa la/ sprel dang bgrum (grum) pa tred (dred) mong ... bzhi srid/ de mi min mi 'dra spun bzhi yin/

dus dang (b)skal pa de tsa na/ srid pa rgyal bu 'thing ge de/ rma kha gzhur gyi gong khar bsdad tsa na/ bod kyis pha rgan ja gsol zer/ rgyas kyang pha rgan ja gsol (17a) zer/ hor gyis pha rgan ja gsol zer/ khong bu



gsum las dam (gdam) pa la/ phas dme 'ong dog (dogs) nas/ pha ki na khyed gsum gang mgyogs can du 'gro zer/ de nas bod kyi(s) mgyogs ja gsol byas pas/ pha ni... rnya lham sgrog gis bcing nas shi zin 'dug/

de nas bod kyi zhal na re/ gson tshe zhab(s) tog ngas byas pas/ pha shi ba'i spur 'di nga dbang zer/ khong gnyis kyis nged dbang zer nas/ dme 'ong la thug la khad tsa/

de nas stong pa gsum gyi pha rol nas/ stong sgum gshen lha 'od dkar bkug/ srid pa gsum gyi pha rol nas/ srid gsum gshen rab mi bo bkug/ dbal ri zur gsum pho brang nas/ lha bon stag la yar bzhugs bkug/ pha btsun (mtshun) smrang gis bgos/ ngang mo rgod kyi gshog pa bsdab (brdabs) bgos/ khog stod gho (mgo) 'byar de phyogs gcig byas/ rked pa steng na mthe bong bzhag pa de phyogs gcig byas/ khog smad steng na snying bzhag pa de phyogs gcig byas/ (17b) gdam sprus (spur) de sku (spu) rgyal bod la yod/ bod kyi(s) khog stod mgo 'byar bdam(s)/ lus kyi gtso bo gho (mgo) yin bsam/ rang grub mchod rten rtsa ba na/ gshen rab mi bo spyan drangs nas/ shing sba bsnyug (smyug) gnyis kyi me la bsregs/ li rgun gnyis kyi 'de gu bkyes/ 'do ba rta la bya ru btsug/ rta lug gnyis kyi gtad yar de nas srid/ hor kyi(s) rked pa the (mthe) bzhag thob pa de/ zla ba'i lung pa zla bkra der/ pha ro bye ma'i nang du sbas nas mthe 'ong (bong) bzung/ hor kyi(s) pha ro dong la (b)skyur ba de nas srid/ mda' nag (nyag) phran skyen pa de nas srid/

rgyas khog smad snying 'byar thob pa de/ khams kyi ra rgya gru so der/ pha ro chu la 'phong ('phang) nas snying de bzung/ rgyas pha ro chu la 'phen pa de nas srid/ rgya nor snying che ba de nas srid/ mi 'phel che ba de nas srid/

rgya mi rab(s) gsum la 'phel ba'i tshe/ (18a) bod mi rab(s) gsum la rmongs pa la/ sngon gyi bon po gsum bkug nas/ lha lug gro mo'i sog bal gyi ju tig (thig) sngon po la/ mo smod nas mo gzhi dkar po'i steng du phab/ rgya mi rabs gsum la 'phel ba'i tshe/ bon mi rabs gsum la rmons pa ci yin/ bco lnga'i rtse la mo btab/ ci ltar byas na rmongs pa grol byas pas/ bon po gsum gyi zhal na re/ khyod kyi pha mtshun rgya la shor ba 'dra/ pha mtshun lon (len) pa'i blo yod/ rmongs 'du(l) de nas grol do (lo) zer/

bod 'dzom la phrom des/ ngas nor chen po khyer na e slus (slu)/ rku 'phro(g) byas na e thob zer nas chos/ nor la ma khyer dgu cig khyer/ gser gyi shakya thub pa/ dngul gyi dton pa gshen rab/ g.yu'i snang ba 'od ldan/ tshem tshem gyi slag pa dgu sbrel/ mu tig gi zag (zhags) pa 'dom dgu/ ldang (gdangs) dbyar mo the phrom gyi slag pa/ gnyan po khyung gi sder/ (18b) gnam sa bshig pa'i bu lud/ gas med sol ba'i rta gho (mgo)/ gzhan yang mang po zer/ de rnams rgya'i yul du khyer nas song/

rgya dbang po che la khyer ltos byas/ yu bu rgya bod hor gsum pha rgan gcig pa la/ pha ro bgos pas khyod la pha mtshun yod pa nga la ston/ nga skyo bas skyo bsang byed/ bsang mchod gcig kyang byed/ phas

bzhag pa'i nor zang zing mang po yod pa yang bzhin (sbyin) byas/ rgya dbang po che(s)/ yu bu rgya bod hor gsum pha mtshun bgos pa la/ phas bzhag pa spun gcig nor bgos/ nga dang khyod lung pa chu(s) bgos nyin dang srib/ nge (ngas) khyod la pha mtshun mi ston zer/ yang rgya dbang po chung ba'i can du song nas pha mtshun ston byas tsa/ rgya bod hor gsum pha ro bgos pa la/ nge (ngas) ni khyod la mi ston zer/ bod kyis nga la phas bzhag pa'i nor/ gser gyi shakya thub pa la sogs yod byas pas/ kho bgos (bgad) nas (19a) he he zer/ bya rgod po rdzong brag gi rtse mo der/ pu shug (pu shu'i) ra ba dar gyi yol ba'i nang du/ pag shu gro dmar gyi nang du btum nas yod/ de la phyag 'tshal (btsal)/ skor ba gsum gyis/ bsang mchod gyis zer ba la/ dga' nas he he byas/ kho gcer bur (bu) la 'gro bcug pas/ khos des (de) ltar byed pa shes nas/ lug snying rnying pa cig mchan 'og tu bcug nas song/ lug snying mal du bzhag nas pha mtshun blang nas 'ong/ de'i nub mo rgya dbang po chung ba'i nag mo cog ro za lung chung des/ mdo (mdang) rmi lam re ngan khyod kyi rog(s) de la pha mtshun shor ba e yin zer/ kho lta ba song tsa snang/ de'i nub mo rmi lam de bas kyang ngan/ ri chen po rmang nas 'gyel ba rmin (rmis)/ mtsho chen po gting nas skam pa rmis/ shing chen rkad (rked) nas chag pa rmis/ de mos dad (ded) la song zer/ khos ded nas song/ rgya bod gnyis kyi 'tshams nas sleb (mtshams su bslebs)/ ngas khyod la pha mtshun la skyo bsang bcug/ khyod (kyis) khyer (19b) ba 'dra/ mal du zlog la song/ yu bu rgya bod kyi chu pha ri (rol) na 'gro dang mdun ma byed zer nas pha rol song tsa/ zam pa chu la 'phong ('phang) nas lan btab pa/

rgya bod hor gsum pha rgan bshes (shi) sa de/
rma kha bzhur gyi gong kha yin/
rang ri (re) spun gsum pha ro bgos sa de/
nyin gyi gad dkar steng thig yin/
nga bod kyi(s) pha ro me la bsregs sa de/
rang grub mchod rten rtsa ba yin/
hor gyi(s) pha ro dong du bcug sa de/
zla ba'i lung pa zla bkra yin/
khyod kyi(s) pha ro (chu la 'phen sa) de/
khams kyi ra rgya gru so yin/
nge (ngas) khyod la(s) pha mtshun tho(b) sa de/
bya rgod po rdzong brag gis (gi) rtse mo yin/
rgya khyod kyi(s) kyang nga la ma nus na/
bod ngos kyang khyod la ma phod na/

byas pas rgya ngu zhing thur du thal/ bod bgad cing (20a) yar la 'ong nas/ gong gi lha bon gsum bkug nas/ nyi ma dgu (la) mar sel byas/ nyi ma bcu gsum la yar sel byas/ gsas mkhar bcu gsum gyi kha rgyan bstod/ bod kyi rmongs bdud de nas grol/



bod 'dzom la phrom la sras khri tho chen po yod/ khri tho chen po de(s)/ gnyen (gnyan) lcam dkar mo khab tu bzhes pa la/ sras gsum yod pa de/ che ba ldang (ldong)/ 'breng ('bring) po dbra/ chung ba 'gru/ de nas dmu za khab tu bzhes pa la/ dmu tsha sga srid/ srin mo go zur can khab tu bzhes pa la/ sras gnyis yod pa de/ che ba dbal/ chung ba lda/ bod ma gsum bu drug bya ba yin/

pha rgan a mye(s) khri tho chen po yin/
de lha ri bzhur po'i mthil nas/
dung gi mdzo mo sman gnyis skyong/
nang nub bzo (zo) gnyis bzhos/
a myes mdzo mo skyong ba la/
bdud kyi jag pa rkya bdun byung/
mdzo (20b) mo sman gnyis dad (ded) nas song/
a myes bdud la ra mda' byas/
sa la bar gyi gling phug ga mar sleb/
dus dang (b)skal pa de tsam na/
gnyan gyi bu mo dkar mo des/
a myes bdud kyi(s) gsod dog(s) nas/
dung gi sbal ba cig tu brdzus/
a myes g.yas song g.yas na(s) bkag/
a myes g.yon song g.yon nas bkag/
a myes bkag nas 'gro ma bcug/
a myes de la thugs khro(s) nas/
rkad (rked) nas gri de tsar kyi(s) bton/
dung gi sbal ba'i rked la rgyab/
sbal bas tsi ku lan gsum btab/
gnyan gyi rgan de'i snyan gyi(s) thos/
a myes gnyan rgan de ba des/
khos nga'i bu mo bsad dgongs nas/
gnyan gyi gzer mda' nag po 'phong ('phang)/
a myes khri tho chen po bsad/
gdung drug bod kyi a bo gnyan gyis bsad/
le len (lan) nag po bdud la blang/
gdung drug bod kyi zhal na re/
'nges (nged) bdud la pha sha le be zer/
gnyan la sha stong 'ded be zer/
dus dang (b)skal (21a) pa de tsam na/
phyva by spyi gtsug rgyal ba des/
mi dang gnyan gyi bar gzu byas/
da khyod gnyan gyi(s) gdung drug pha stong 'jol cig byas/
gnyan gyi(s) gdung drug la pha stong 'jal ba la/

ldong la ldong lha rma phrom byin/

de g.yu 'brug zang(s) kyi ze ba can/
mtho mi mngon nam mkha'i dbyings na 'dug/
ldong dar phyug can gyi dgra bla byed pa yin/

dbra la dbra mo dbra khra byin/
bya khyu(ng) lcags kyi mchu sder can/
nam mkha' 'grim zhing gangs srong nyul/
dbra btsun dar gyi dgra bla bed pa chad/

'gru la 'gru ('bri) mo phrom phrom byin/
lha g.yag dbal gyi ra co can /
'gru la nyul zhing rdza ri 'grim/
'gru dpa' dar (can) gyi dgra bla byed pa chad/

sga la skar ma leg(s) po byin/
gser stag mtshal gyi ri mo can/
khams gsum 'grim zhing sga la nyul/
sga phyug dar can gyi dgra bla yin/

dba lda gnyis kyi stong skal la/
shel gyi ra (21b) skyes kham pa dang/
dung gi khyi mo dkar mo byin/
pha stong chung ba'i snying nad kyi(s)/
gnyan la pha stong lon zer te/
bdud la pha sha nam len byas/
spun bzhi mi ri (res) rta re nyos/
ldong gi(s) rgya'i gsal ba yang mdo('do) nyos/
ldong bdud la pha sha len du song/
bdud kyi dar gho (mgo) mthong nas log/
de e log ma log kun gyi(s) shes/
dbras sgo'i gsang rje yag pa nyos/
dbra bdud la pha sha len du song/
bdud kyi khyi skad thos nas log/
e log ma log kun gyis shes/
sgas 'jong ('jang) gi dmar nya nyal pa nyos/
bdud la pha sha len du song/
bdud kyi dud gho (mgo) mthong nas log/
e log ma log kun gyis shes/
'gru hor gyi tril rje yag pa nyos/
bdud la pha sha len du song/
gser gyi dhan ('dan) chen phyag na bsnams/
gnyan gyi ber ka sbrul mgo sa la lan gsum brdab/
shar kun snag gong khar phyin tsa na/



gnyan (bdud) dmag mang po 'ub kyi(s) 'dus/
'gru'i rgyab brten lha mi (22a) mang pos byas/
bdud mkhar phye ra phyed rdzong phab/
bdud kyi mi nag dus chen bsad/
bdud rje khyab pa lag ring btson du bzung/
bdud phrug mang po brag la brdab/
bdud chang gang gi(s) thob pa des/
mi mi 'chi ba'i bdud rtsi yin/
a lcag 'gru'i dpa' chang yin/
bdud kyi dar nag zer ba de/
a lcag 'gru yi dpa' dar byas/
dpa' dar zer ba de nas srid/
bdud kyi ngam stag skya bo bsad pa'i stag mgo de/
pho mo ldong la mnong phud byas/
mnong phud zer ba de nas srid/
nag po bdud kyi rta sga de/
..............................
se khyung dbra'i dpa' zas byas/
dpa' bo dpa' zas de la zer/
ngam stag skya bo'i rtsib gshog g.yas pa de/
'gu rje lha dbang thod dkar gyi stag ral rgyan can byas/
stag shar ba'i stag ral (de nas srid)/
ngam stag skya bo'i rtsib gshog g.yon pa de/
'gru mo zang yag ma'i stag phud byas/
sman bu mo'i stag (22b) phud de (nas srid)/....
de bdud la pha sha blang lug(s) yin/

# The Origin Myths of the First King of Tibet as Revealed in the *Can Lnga*

At the Fourth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies in Munich I gave a short analysis of a body of early texts[1] which are known to us only by report. They are referred to as *Can lnga*, the 'five works'. They are enumerated in *BZh* as follows:

1. The *Yo ga (yi ge) lha dge (gyes) can*
2. The *lTab-ma ('dab-ma) dgu tsag (brtsegs) can*
3. The *Zing po sna tshogs can*
4. The *gSang ba phyag rgya can*
5. The *sPun po can.*[2]

They are also briefly mentioned in *NyChB*,[3] a text that helped us to solve a certain number of problems in the spellings of the titles. At the time I presented my paper in Munich, it was the only work containing information on them which I was able to mention and it did not permit me to explain in detail what all five texts were concerned with. Consequently, I chose only Nos.1 and 4 for discussion, because according to *NyChB* they deal with origin myths of the first Tibetan king, gNya'-khri btsan-po. Of such myths there are three traditions: *bsGrags pa bon lugs*, the 'Bon tradition that was proclaimed', *gSang ba chos lugs*, the 'Buddhist tradition that was hidden' and *Yang gsang lugs*, the 'most secret tradition'. It is either under these terms or simply as *bod kyi yig tshang*, the 'Tibetan records', that they are recounted in later works[4] without any mention of *Can lnga*.

Text No. 1, the *Yi ge lha gyes can*, is certainly concerned with the origin myth of the Bon tradition, but regarding what text No.4, the *gSang ba phyag rgya can*, contains, our sources of information differ. In my Munich paper I followed closely the information given in *NyChB* which states that it deals with the origin myth of the Buddhist tradition. However, another source of information, *DChB*, with which we shall be dealing in this paper, differs radically on this point and it has also a different title for No.5 as we shall see.[5] It is for these reasons and to make a study of the other three of the five works that I propose here to take up the subject again in the light of recent new publications.

If indeed there ever were texts bearing such titles as *BZh*, *NyChB* and *DChB* indicate, they have as yet not come to light. However, this need not deter us from making an attempt to study them according to the information given in relatively old and rare works such as *DChB*. In these works the *Can lnga* form the framework for organising their materials on Tibetan history, a framework that is not used in other historical works.

Although these five works are at present not to hand, they, in my view, represent some of the earliest Tibetan official historiography after the Dunhuang documents, but they were largely ignored by the Bonpo and Buddhist historians for reasons which will become evident in this paper. The author of *DChB* does not make clear whether he was actually consulting these works or another source which deals with them.

The first two of the five works are concerned with origin myths of the first Tibetan king while the rest of the five are devoted to historical accounts beginning from the descendants of the first king through the imperial period, that is from the seventh to the ninth centuries A.D. While works dealing with origin myths are described as *lha rabs*, the 'account of the gods', the period of the expansion of the empire is known as *mnga' dar*, the 'expansion of political power', and its fall as *gyes mdo* or *bsil chad*, the 'disintegration' (p.238).

Origin myths of the first king are of course mentioned in passing by later historians, but when they do mention them, the majority were only interested in the Buddhist tradition, that is the 'Indian origin' of the king. The tradition according to which the king descended from heaven is either simply brushed aside or mentioned disapprovingly with the comment that it is because the Bonpo love heaven and the Phyva gods.[6] *DChB* is not free from these partisan Buddhist views as we shall see, but at the same time it has the great merit of having reproduced all the genealogical sequences of the origin myth which remain only imperfectly known to us from other works. It is this *chos 'byung* alone that gives a detailed account of genealogies in the myth showing not only a kinship pattern, but also a hierarchical organisation among the gods involved. For this reason, it is now easy to see how schematic the account of the myth given in the Dunhuang documents is, and how much they became the object of misinterpretation or reinterpretation and manipulation in both Buddhist and Bonpo works on the origin of the first king.

Under the impact of Buddhists claiming the king's Indian origin, the Bonpo also began to have a similar version to the Buddhist one. It is recounted in the 'rediscovered' texts concerning the rites of the goddess

1. Article No. 16.
2. *BZh*, p.75,ll.9-12.
3. Pp.496-97.
4. For example, *BK*, p.435; *ShDz* (Haarh, 1969: 407-414); *SM*, p.55; *YJChB*, p.41.
5. For the *sPun po can*, see n.80.

6. *KhG*, f.5a, 7.

Byams-ma. In these ritual texts, the two traditions of the origin myth, that is the Indian royal origin and the Tibetan native origin, are strangely mingled.[7] The king is presented as descended half from Indian, and half from Tibetan deities. Other Bonpo works like *GB* [8] and *SG*,[9] however, maintain the early tradition of the myth in which the king descends from heaven although with a different divine geneaology from that of the *Yi ge lha gyes can* as recounted in *DChB*. It is clear in these two Bonpo historical works that an attempt is being made to synthesize the early origin myth of the king with that of the Bonpo cosmogonic theories found in works such as *ShDz*.[10]

Before taking up the genealogical system in the myth given in *DChB* let me discuss briefly the origin of the Buddhist myth concerning the king. It is not known exactly from what date the myth embodying the Indian origin of the king began to grow. It became popular among Buddhist historians not simply because it was gratifying for the Tibetan Buddhists that the first king was a descendant from the Śākya, the clan into which Buddha Śākyamuni was born, but it had an important strategic and ideological purpose for the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet. We know that the myth is not mentioned in any of the sources going back beyond the eleventh century, but it is already very much developed in the works that are reputed to be from about the late eleventh century.[11] However, by the mid-twelfth century, it is clear that there already existed various versions of the myth of the Indian origin. After rejecting several versions, Nyang-ral accepts one, but the reason for his choice remains as obscure as the reasons for which he has rejected other versions including that of the Indian treatise *Devātiśayastotraṭikā*.[12] This Indian treatise, which was translated into Tibetan in the eleventh century, contains a story of Rupati's escape from his opponents into the Himalayan mountains. This story was interpreted in one way as the origin myth of the Tibetan race and in another as that of the first king although it has no connexion with either of them.[13] Nyang-ral had repudiated the story as not having anything to do with Tibet, but its interpretation as being the origin myth of the king persisted. Later Nel-pa Paṇḍita too dismissed it[14] and so did

7. *DS*, p.636-40.
8. F.11a-12b.
9. Article No. 19, pp. 324-26.
10. Pp.5-12 and *GG* in the same volume, pp.44-69.
11. For example, *KChK*, pp.54-84.
12. *NyChB*, pp.156-58.
13. *T* Vol.46, No.2004, p.24-1-4 (Haarh,1969: 193). In *BTChB*, as the origin of the king, p.180; in *DM*, as that of the Tibetan race, p.30.
14. Uebach, 1987: 54.



dPa'-bo gTsug-lag 'phreng-ba,[15] but these historians nevertheless maintained the tradition of the Indian origin of the king.

It is thought that "the motive for these modifications of the ancient tradition...are not merely to be found in flattery or vanity, but in the urgent necessity of creating a new traditional basis and background for the Dynasty".[16] Readiness to modify or change a tradition or even alter textually and then reinterpret it is a well-known feature of Buddhist 'historians' in Tibet. For example, at the beginning of the ninth century a passage concerned with a prophecy of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* tantra was taken out of context and rendered as if it were concerned with a geographical location in Tibet when it is in fact about a place in India itself. The prophecy mentions a king called Ca or Tsa construed to be referring to the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan.[17] In later centuries, other prophetical passages of the same tantra continued to be misused in order to match names of places in Tibet and those of its kings.[18]

However, it is not certain that the myth concerning the Indian origin was consciously forged just in order to give a Buddhist aura to the origin of the first king. Already in the royal period, the origin myth of the first king was undergoing various developments. This is attested in a Dunhuang document, *PT* 1038.[19] Three ways of looking at the origin myth are proposed in this document, a tradition which is maintained in later works such as *DChB*, but the contents of the three are different.

I propose here to make a rough translation of this document in order to facilitate discussion of the origin myths with which we are particularly concerned. Although it has already been studied by two scholars,[20] many points in it still remain obscure and I do not pretend here to solve all the problems. As it is ancient and pertinent to the origin myth, I consider it important to have a close look at it and compare it with the accounts of origin myths of the king given in *DChB*.

There was a country with castles; within it arose individual places (such as) sDe-bzhi.[21] In that place appeared the king of lTi,[22] Thod-rgyal, the *btsan po* of sPu-rgyal Bon.

15. *KhG*, f.6a, 3 (Macdonald, 1971: 206-7).
16. Haarh, 1969: 169.
17. Imaeda, 1981: 305-6.
18. *DNg* (Roerich, 1988: x-xi; 46-47).
19. Macdonald, Imaeda, 1978, Pl.312.
20. Lalou, 1953; Macdonald, 1971: 215-18.
21. It is probable that this is a proper name (Macdonald, 1978: 216).
22. It seems to me that this is also a place name, but *cf.* Macdonald, 1978: 216.

Some say his kingdom belongs to the twelve small kingdoms (i.e. one of the twelve). (Others) say it does not belong to them.[23]

Concerning the origin of the lineage of the *btsan po*:

(1) Firstly, it is said that it is the god called Ku-spyi ser-bzhi in heaven who is the master of all *ma sangs* and who rules over the universe and is the Phyva of the Phyva gods.

(2) Secondly, it is said he originates from either the inferior caste of meat-eaters or the red-faced king or the *gnod sbyin* Dza, the master of the circle of the snow-capped mountain ranges.

(3) Thirdly, it is said that it is (the god) called Khri Bar-la bdun-tshigs who resides at the summit of the thirteenth stage of heaven.

It is (also) said (that the king) descended from the gods in heaven to earth to be the lord of the black-headed men, the master of animals with a mane (i.e. horse) that had no owners, together with the ministers lHo, rNgegs, with the Bonpo mTshe and gCo, with the servants Sha and sPug.

He became the lord of men, gods and demons.[24] He arrived in (a place named as) Bod-ka g.yag-drug. Whatever the case may be, - and who knows? -, his lineage was given the name sPu-bod and he sPu-rgyal, the king of sPu....

The manuscript is incomplete. Scholarly opinion reckons that the author of this manuscript fragment could be a Bonpo, the phrase *bon gi(gyi) btsan po* being used rather than *bod kyi* in a kind of 'playing with words', such as in "un jeu de mots scolastique en usage chez les bon-po".[25] But it is rather unfair to charge this ancient Tibetan author with playing with words just because it does not suit our preconceived ideas, for it is common in early documents for the suffixes *d/n* to interchange and occur as alternatives according to what terms they stand alongside. The word *thod rgyal* is not a specific Bonpo term either as has been suggested. It is probably a contraction of *thod rgal gyi rgyal po*,[26] in the sense of the 'kings who appear suddenly' (*glo bur gyi rgyal po*) in contrast to the 'elected king' (*bskos pa'i rgyal po*) though the idea of these two categories of kings is attested only from about the eleventh century.

23. For the twelve princelings, see *DChB*, p. 225; *PT* 1286 (Bacot, 1940: 80), *PT* 1290 (Macdonald, 1971: 311-28).

24. Here the *blon po* lHo and rNgegs and the servants Sha and sBug are invisaged to have descended from heaven to earth with king, but in other sources they do not descend from heaven, see below. The phrase *mi rje lha dang bdud du brgyis (bgyis) nas/* is translated as "Au moment où les dieux luttaient contre les démons" (Macdonald, 1978: 217).

25. Macdonald, 1978: 218.

26. *KChK*, p.97.



It is curious, to say the least, that for these scholars there were in the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. Bonpo authors who were motivated by their faith to manipulate the terms *bon/bod* and then assert that no religion called Bon as such existed before the eleventh century A.D.[27]

What is certain is that in the time of the author of the manuscript, various versions of the origin myth existed. It is clear that the author deals with the problem with extreme caution, almost like a modern sceptic. He never fails to use the formulas such as 'we hear', 'it is said', 'whatever the case may be', 'who knows?'. He does not wish to commit himself to any of the versions of the myth although he seems to favour the version according to which the king descended from heaven. It must be stated that the 'sophistication' of this author is most striking when we compare his scholarly approach to the bold assertions embedded in partisan views which are a characteristic feature of most of the later *chos 'byung* authors.

In the version of the myth presented as the first in the document in hand, the god Ku-spyi ser-bzhi is described as being the master of all *ma sangs*, that is to say the *gnyan* type of mountain spirits. This god is characterised as being a Phyva of the Phyva gods. As will be seen, the Phyva gods reside on the thirteenth stage of heaven and were considered as the divine ancestors of the early Tibetan kings in other documents[28] and ritual texts,[29] but here it must be noted that Khri Bar-la bdun-tshigs is shown to have no connexion with the Phyva gods. Another point is that this document does not use the name Nyag-khri btsan-po like other Dunhuang documents. The reading of the second version of the myth is rather uncertain. It can be understood that the king originated in the low caste (*caṇḍāla*) of meat-eater (*piśāca*), or the red-faced king or the *yakṣa* Dza, because the term *rigs* is repeated in each case. If we ignore the repetition of the term *rigs*, it can then be read as the king originated from the meat-eater of the low caste, whose (chief) is the red-faced king who is the *yakṣa* Dza. This interpretation is rather unlikely. The terminology in this section therefore clearly conveys Indian concepts which proves that the document was composed in a period when Buddhism was well established in Tibet, but the later Buddhist invention according to which the king is of Indian royal descent did not yet exist. The meat-eater must refer to the Tibetans themselves who are in fact the red-faced people according to historical sources.[30] As to the question of the *yakṣa* Dza, I have seen no work indicating such a spirit, but the Indian king Tsa/Dza,

27. Macdonald, 1978: 219.

28. Richardson, 1985: p.66: *phyva ya bla bdag drug*.

29. *Sha brgya zan brgya glud rabs rdzong dang bcas pa* (*gTo 'bum dgos 'dod sna tshogs re skong*, Gangtok, 1978), p.310.

30. For example, *BZh* , p.6, l.10.

the most important mythic figure in the origin myth of the tantric teachings, is identified with the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan (742-797) by a Dunhuang document which I published elsewhere[31] and also by another Dunhuang document as mentioned above (n.17).

Although the Buddhist myth of the Indian royal descent of the king is not to be found in the second version of the myth in the document under discussion, the fact is that three Indian concepts for the origin myth are already involved. The gap between this version of the myth and the later development of the Indian royal lineage seems to be difficult to account for, but there is the matter of the *yakṣa* Dza being the originator. As mentioned above, two other Dunhuang documents connect a king called Tsa of Indian origin with Khri Srong-lde-btsan in one way or another. In my view, it is therefore possible that these various myths may have led to the creation of the origin myth of the Indian royal descent, especially that of the Śākya clan by the Tibetan Buddhists.

As already mentioned, with the consolidation of Buddhism in Tibet from the eleventh century onwards, the myth of the Indian origin of the king became the accepted norm. The adoption of this myth by the Buddhists has rendered not only the indigenous origin myth of the king insignificant in cultural life, but has relegated it to the realm of popular 'superstition' (*rnam rtog*). Therefore, the early native belief system, which the indigenous origin myth meant to perpetuate through its recreation by means of rituals, was made to look meaningless. This indigenous myth consequently remains in existence only in rituals that are not totally submerged by Buddhism. The creation of the Buddhist tradition of the origin myth had therefore an ideological purpose and was an effective device for breaking down the basic structure of the native origin myth of the first king on which were built many of the systems of autochthonic beliefs.

Myths are of course regarded as containing no real substance and are often opposed to the historical facts. This devaluation of the myth concept has often rightly been rejected by anthropologists for whom myths can have special significance and play an important role in early belief systems through ritual expression in primitive and traditional societies. The interconnexion between myths and rituals and the social functions of rituals are something that is related to cultural life in traditional societies.

In the case of the Tibetans, the *bsang* ritual, for example, is construed as having been connected with the origin myth of the king. Its practice cannot be missing from any Tibetan cultural manifestation. Moreover, there is a special Tibetan term for the origin myth, *smrang*, a

31. Article No. 6.



term which normally designates the part of mythic narration in rituals.[32] This term has the connotation of origin and archetype myth, but it is often misdefined in later works. It is defined as *rig byed* (*veda* ) or *ngag skad* 'verbal'.[33] It is of course etymologically connected with the term *smra*, 'speech', but has got nothing to do with *veda*. Being a term primarily concerned with the native concept, it was not used to translate the Sanskrit term *veda* whose Tibetan equivalent is *rig byed* and therefore not included in the ninth century Buddhist Sanskrit-Tibetan dictionary, the *Mahāvyutpatti.* Through the effect of Buddhist-orientated education, the compilers of the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* often seem to be able to define such indigenous terms only with Indic ideas. In other words, it shows to what extent things have been transformed into Indic ideas, totally overlooking the early native concepts.

The version of the origin myth according to which the king descended from heaven to earth embodies many a fundamental aspect of autochthonic culture. It above all conveyed the idea of the sacred nature of the king, thereby contributing to the formation of the notion of kingship and royal power. It was the foundation of Tibet's royal lineage through which later descendants in the line could claim the legitimacy of being the ruler by reenacting mythic rituals. It proclaimed a new creation and a new order from the chaos of the twelve principalities which preceded Tibet being reigned over as a unified country.

This origin myth, in my opinion, was the matrix in which the early theogonic system was conceived and then gave birth not only to various cosmogonic myths but also to theogonic lineage systems. It is from this cosmo-theogonic scheme that the early mythical rituals were developed. By ritual (*gto*) I mean not the stereotype habitual or customary ritual (*cho ga*), but that which implies a belief in supernatural agencies or forces that inhabit the world along with man. In other words, rituals regarded in this way convey a magico-religious system in which the archetype of the cosmo-theogonic myth is re-created each time the rituals are performed. Rituals therefore often embody a system of religious belief. There is yet another dimension of rituals which is often neglected in Tibetan studies: their social function in society. Rituals cannot be understood unless they are considered within the context of the social situation in which or for which they are executed. Ritual beliefs and practices reflect social structure and bind social relations. It is within this context that my studies of the following myths and rituals, such as origin

32. Article No.17, n.5.

33. *BG, p. 2181.*

myths of the Tibetan race,[34] rituals of soul (*bla*),[35] ransom (*glud*),[36] 'wind-horse'(*rlung rta*),[37] and purification (*bsang*),[38] are meant to demonstrate the early indigenous system of beliefs that not only have survived or been adapted to the local situation within a predominantly Buddhist culture, but still remain strong as agents of social and religious organisation, particularly among the populations of Tibetan culture where the ties of the traditional society have not yet disintegrated.

This system of beliefs, in my view, has all the characteristic ingredients of a coherent religion: divinities and their cosmo-theogonic mythology associated with the sacred and divine character of the first king, rituals performable by priests, called *bon* or *bon po* or *lha bon* also mythologically associated with the first king and who intervenes to deal with divinities and demons for various purposes. It is to this system of beliefs that a certain number of Dunhuang documents including *PT* 972 and 1038 refer as Bon and its practitioners as *bon* or *bon po*. This Bon must of course be distinguished from what one calls the Svastika Bon of the later period which is a reorganization of this Bon along Buddhist philosophical and institutional lines with gShen-rab Mi-bo as the central figure from the eleventh century onwards.[39]

It may be interesting to note that under the impact of modern nationalism, Tibetans now do not seem to like the idea of the first king coming from India. In a recent publication, Chab-spel wrote an article entitled simply 'gNya'-khri btsan-po was a Tibetan'![40] This simple affirmation perhaps requires some remarks here. He takes very seriously the story according to which the king came from the region of sPo-bo, to the south-east of Kong-po. He dismisses the accounts of myths as *lha sgrung*, 'god story' or *byis sgrung*, 'child story' (p.5), terms which are now currently used by those who are exposed to the influence of Marxist ideology. The myths for him are therefore simply unworthy to be taken into consideration. The myth about the king's origin from heaven was simply invented by the Bonpo in order to cover up the fact that he was banished from sPo-bo where he was of *the'u rang* origin (p.26). Chab-spel believes that the story of the king coming from sPo-bo and arriving in Kong-po before going to Yarlung through the Dvags-po valley is historical.

34. Article No. 17.
35. Article No.19.
36. Article No.20.
37. Article No.22.
38. Article No.21.
39. Article No.9. *cf.* Stein, 1988.
40. Chab-spel, 1987.



Having sketched the general outline of origin myths in the light of the Dunhuang document and the cosmo-theogonic scheme which the myths envisage, let us now look at the question of the account of origin myths given in *DChB*. I already used a passage from this work in my article on the question of identification of Mount Gyang-to in Kong-po.[41] As mentioned earlier, *DChB* is the only work that contains a relatively detailed account of origin myths. In presenting them, the author takes up the *Can lnga* as the framework in which to present the history of Buddhism in Tibet from p.181, the first half of the work being taken up by the history of Buddhism in India. Like all the other Tibetan authors of the *chos 'byung* type works, his main preoccupation is the history of Buddhism. The parts such as the account of origin myths of the first king are therefore an incidental product in the main work. It is therefore by no means certain that we are dealing yet with a full account of the myths.

*DChB* presents itself as a commentary on a versified text which remains anonymous, but is probably by the *mkhas pa* Jo-'bum (1123-1175) as suggested by Chab-spel, in his preface to *DChB*. What I propose here is to give a summary of the whole account concerning the *Can lnga* and the myths.

However, some comments concerning the author and the date of his work may be appropriate before undertaking the résumé. Considering the unusual character and hence importance of the work, one would expect that it would be abundantly quoted by other Tibetan Buddhist authors that followed him in later centuries, but that is not the case. Nor does the author himself quote any known or datable sources.

Chab-spel has tentatively identified the *mkhas pa* lDe'u with the *dge bshes* lDe'u, a bKa'-gdams-pa master living in the twelfth century, on the strength of identical names, thus assigning the work to the same period. He further suggests that the *mkhas pa* lDe'u may be identical with the *mkhas pa* Jo-'bum, whom he assumes to be the author of the versified text. In other words, the real author is someone else according to him. This can hardly be accepted. All the same, the *mkhas pa* lDe'u for the time being remains unidentified. In my view, *DChB* is one and the same as *lDe ston chos 'byung* mentioned in *KhG*.[42]

In his efforts to find a clue for the date of *DChB*, Chab-spel has, in fact, either overlooked or did not understand what the chronological part of *DChB* contains. It in fact clearly indicates the date of its composition. First of all, it gives the version of the calculation of the duration of the Doctrine made by mChims according to the *Abhidharma* tradition. mChims here, in my opinion, stands for mChims Nam-mkha'-grags (? b.1252) who became the seventh abbot of sNar-thang and was famous for

41. Article No.14, pp. 220-23.
42. f.9b, 4; 155a, 1.

his commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa* known as *mChims mdzod.*[43] After rejecting this calculation the author of *DChB* then gives the version of the calculation made by a certain *chos rje*. A little further down, he states that the *chos rje* made the calculation in Thang-chen in the fire-hare year (1207) and he himself made the calculation in the iron-bird year (1261).[44] Now the *chos rje* here refers to the Kashmirian master Śākyaśrībhadra and Thang-chen is the monastery Sol-nag Thang-po-che in the 'Phyong-rgyas valley founded in 1017. The Kashmirian master did his computing there in 1207 and not Chag *lo tsā ba* Chos-rje-dpal (1197-1264) as I suggested in an earlier version of this article, for according to *DNg* Chos-rje-dpal came to Thang-po-che at the age of sixty-two, i. e. in 1261.[45] All the same, *DChB* was completed in 1261. It is possible that the author *DChB* was a disciple of the Kashmirian master and a bKa'-gdams-pa monk with a certain amount of interest in the rNying-ma-pa history.

We have already dicussed the two traditions: *bsGrags pa bon lugs*, the 'Bonpo tradition that was proclaimed' and *gSang ba chos lugs*, the 'Buddhist tradition that was hidden'. Now *DChB* reverses these phrases to *gSang ba bon lugs* and *Grags pa chos lugs* as is the case in the versified text of which *DChB* is a commentary. They are therefore the 'Bonpo tradition that was hidden' and the 'Buddhist tradition that was known'. No reason is given for this reversal.[46] This anomaly is not attested in any other work I have so far been able to consult. One wonders why? Although *JSChB* comments on the same versified text as *DChB* and was probably written in the same period, it does not have this reversal.[47] The versified text in *DChB* has the following lines:

> *gsang ba bon lugs 'dod khams lha las chad/*
> *grags pa chos lugs gdung brgyud lha las chad/*[48]
> "(The king) descended from the gods of Kāmadhātu, the Bonpo tradition that was hidden.
> He descended from the gods of the lineage (i.e. Indian royal lineage), the Buddhist tradition that was known".

The change seems to have been motivated by Buddhist sentiment. For a Buddhist, the gods in such a cosmo-theogonic context as the present one cannot be any other than those who occur in the Buddhist cosmogony

43. *DChB*, p.408.
44. *DChB*, p.409:*...me mo yos/...thang chen gnas su chos rjes brtsis/...lcags mo bya'i lo la brtsis pas.../*
45. Cf. *DNg*, (Roerich, 1988: 88).
46. *DChB*, pp.227, 238, see the résumé of the text below.
47. *JSChB*, p.99.
48. *DChB*, pp.227, 238.



and so the author further affirms this stand in a most obscure and ill-contrived passage which says:

> "As for the reason why one says 'known as' (*grags pa*), it is because the lineage (of the king) came from the Abhāsvarā gods (*'od gsal* ). In the Bonpo tradition, it is of the gods of Kamādhātu. As there are gods who are good and those who are bad, the lineage (of the Abhāsvarā gods, hence the good one) is mentioned in the *sūtra* and that is why (the lineage) is called *grags pa*."[49]

This insertion of the gods according to the Buddhist cosmogony with its hierarchy as found in the *Abhidharmakośa* is of particular interest. The artificiality of the ploy which reveals itself is clear. The versified text has at first *bsgrags* (p.226) and then later changes to *grags* and so the author of *DChB* accordingly picks up the latter spelling in the sense of 'known as' or 'said to be'. This is also a good example of the Tibetan Buddhist propensity for altering the wording of a text and then reinterpreting it accordingly. Furthermore, the author asserts that the Indian prince Ru-pa-skyes, who is presented as the ancestor of the Tibetan king according to the *Grags pa chos lugs* tradition, is an 'emanation' of Mahākaruṇa and then quotes a dubious passage supposed to be from a *sūtra* to support his assertion.[50] This leads us further to question the terminology of the two phrases: *bsgrags pa bon lugs* and *gsang ba chos lugs*, and their origins. We have already noted that *NyChB* is one of the first to relate the two traditions of the origin myth under such terms. Among the Bonpo there are categories of teachings which are classified under the term of *bsgrags pa*,[51] but no particular historical tradition known as *bsGrags pa bon lugs* exists. In *NyChB*, it is explained that the *gSang ba phyag rgya can*, one of the *Can lnga* is concerned with the tradition of the Indian origin of the king.[52] Now, in *DChB*, it is clear that this work has got nothing to do with that tradition. On the contrary, it is, as we shall see, concerned with the physical defects, illnesses and violent or unnatural deaths of kings and other members of the royal house. That is why it is called the 'Sealed Secrecy' (*gsang ba phyag rgya can*). The information concerning this work given in *NyChB* must therefore be taken with circumspection. There is agreement that the origin myth of the king descending from heaven is recounted in the *Yi ge lha gyes can*. It is possible that this tradition came to be called *bsGrags pa bon lugs* when the Buddhist tradition of the Indian origin was created. The latter was then

49. *grags pa'i rgyu mtshan ni gdung rgyud 'od gsal gyi lha las chad la/ bon lugs ni 'dod khams lha las chad de/ lha la yang bzang ngan yod pas gdung rgyud grags par yongs la mdo nas gsungs pas kyang grags par mchi'o/* (*DChB*, pp.238-39).
50. *DChB*, pp.243-43.
51. *LShDz* (Karmay, 1972: 15, n.3); Blondeau, 1984: 109-18.
52. Article No.16, pp 241-42.

called *gSang ba chos lugs* in contrast to *bsGrags pa bon lugs*, but naturally it had no relation with either the *Yi ge lha gyes can* or with the *gSang ba phyag rgya can*. In other words, the tradition known as *gSang ba chos lugs* was something totally apart. It could not be otherwise. Nyang-ral seems to have tried to connect it with the *gSang ba phyag rgya can* while the author of *DChB* manifestly tries to attach it to the *Yi ge lha gyes can*. Nyang-ral has therefore either followed another dubious tradition or given a false explanation when he says that the *gSang ba phyag rgya can* deals with the tradition of *gSang ba chos lugs*. All this shows that the phrases *bsgrags pa bon lugs* and *gsang ba chos lugs* were Buddhist creations which do not have any intrinsic meaning as far as these historical traditions are concerned. We might indeed say that, in this case, what we have is a playing with words. The phrase *bsgrags pa bon lugs*, however, has come to signify a particular tradition of a certain number of Bonpo texts concerned with legends of Padmasambhava's birth for later rNying-ma-pa authors, a fact A.-M. Blondeau has well demonstrated.[53]

Apart from this Tibetan Buddhist imbroglio, the author of *DChB* has otherwise produced a fairly coherent account of the *Can lnga*. Let me now give a summary of these texts given in *DChB*. The summary will contain the full account of the origin myths of gNya'-khri btsan-po, and other parts of *DChB* relevant to the *Can lnga*.

### Summary of the parts of *DCHB* dealing with the contents of the five *Can*

As in *PT* 1038, the author, after dealing with the twelve principalities, takes up the three different traditions about the origin of the king: the secret, the proclaimed and the ultra secret.

(p.226) According to the ultra secret tradition, the king descends from the *the'u brang* spirit. In the country of sPu-bo, there are nine brothers in the clan Mo-btsun, the youngest being Ma-snya u-be-ra. His tongue is so big that it could cover his face and the space between his fingers are joined together (i.e. a webbed hand). He has a hard character and is magically powerful which is the cause of his exile. Bonpo and Buddhists(!) proficient in rituals perform the rite of *The'u brang skyas 'degs* ('Sending away the *the'u brang* spirit with departing gifts') and he is finally banished from sPu-bo. He comes across a people who are looking for someone who could be made their king. They ask him: "Where do you come from?" "I come from sPu-bo", he replies. "You have a strange tongue and hands! Do you possess any magic power?" (p.227) "I am banished because of being magically too powerful". "Let us make you our king", they said. Carrying him on their necks, they proclaimed him as their king called gNya'-khri btsan-po, the 'Nape-enthroned king'.

53. *Cf.* Blondeau, 1985: 50-51, 90.



This is considered to be a story designed to mock the origin of the king.



*Plate 29: gNya'-khri btsan-po lands on Mt. Gyang-to. Dolanji, HP, India (SGK 1983)*

**I.** The *Yo ga (yi ge) lha gyes can*

**(A)** *gSang ba bon lugs*, the 'secret Bon tradition', according to which the king descends from the gods of Kāmadhātu.

At the beginning, there is the god Phyva Ye-mkhyen chen-po. From him the god Legs-pa'i hor-drug of Kho-ma 'Bro-rje appears.[54] Only his breathing, the blinking of his eyes and the movement of his hair are perceptible. Heaven and earth are not yet separated. As he blows between them, thirteen stages upwards in heaven are erected

54. The Tibetan verb here and some other places in the text is *srid pa*, 'to appear', 'to create', 'to come into existence', 'to procreate', *cf.* Stein, 1973: 413-17.

and thirteen stages downwards under the earth are built (p.228). Between these two, which are like a charm-box, black and white lights shine. The white lights are the pro-existence and the black the anti-existence. From the action of these two, there appears a gold flower as the male and a turquoise flower as the female. From their union, the god Kha-dang skyol-med is born. The latter with the goddess dByings-kyi skyol-med begets the god rNam-lha dkar-gsum. The latter with Phyva-za Ye-then begets the god sKar-ma yol-lde. The latter with g.Yu-ri phyug-mo begets four sons: dKar-nam rgyal-ba, lTing-rgyu dkar-po, lHa-khri shel-dkar (Khri-shes dkar-po) and the youngest rTser-rtser.[55]

From the god Khri-shes dkar-po, three brothers are born. They are known as the 'gods of royal song' (*mgur lha*): Phyi-lha Thog-dkar, Bar-lha 'Od-'bar and Nang-lha Gul-rgyal. These three bothers scatter their spittle in the air from which a little white cloud like a piece of felt is created. In its middle there appears a white god with turquoise horns. He is called gNam-then-che and is the first of seven *then* gods: rGung-then-che, sPrin-then-che, Zil-then-che, Char-then-che, Mong-then-che and gNam-la rong-rong.[56]

From the union of gNam-la rong-rong and Cha-ma-ting, sTag-cha yal-yol is born. This god resides in sTeng-mel, the fifteenth stage of heaven, below which there is Kha-yel, the fourteenth stage and below that the thirteenth stage (p.229). sTag-cha yal-yol resides in a transparent palace made of five precious things, its base is made of iron, the four corners from gold, the battlements from crystal and the *mchong* stone, the outer rims of the roof made from turquoise, the turrets from conch-shell and the dome from crystal. On a throne made of various precious things, he sits wearing a golden robe with green borders and white sleeves. He holds a gold sceptre.

From the union of sTag-cha yal-yol and Tshe-za Khyad-khyud four brothers are born:

I Ya-lha bDal-drug
II Phyva-lha Bram-chen
III rGya-lha 'Brong-nam
IV 'O-de gung-rgyal.[57]

The four brothers do not agree who should stay in heaven and who should go to the land of men. It is agreed that they should make the decision by casting dice. A white cloth is spread on a lawn and dice are thrown over it. Nos. I and II win and so they stay on in heaven, but Nos. III and IV lose and so they leave.

rGya-lha 'Brong-nam, No. III, leaves heaven to be the god of rGya and there he has nine sons: (1) Kha-'od rgyal-ba, (2) Zla-'od rgyal-ba, (3) Grags-kyi-lha, (4) Grung-gur-kyi-rgyal, (5) Kho-de sang-pa, (6) Khu-'phangs rgyal-ba, (7) dGu-sor phyug-po, (8) Kha-dang chen-po, (9) Gar-gar-rje.

'O-de gung-rgyal, No IV,[58] remains for a while in the heavens where with the nine Thang-nga goddesses he has 101 sons. His offspring are so numerous that he becomes the father of all the gods in the heavens. (p.230) Then he moves to the intermediate space where he is called 'Ol-lha 'Breng-'breng. Together with the nine Thang-nga goddesses of the intermediate space, they produce as many offspring as the atoms of a mountain and so he becomes the father of all gods of the space. When he comes to earth, he has two names: Khu-yug mang-skyes and also 'Ol-lha Sha-zan. He becomes the chief of the council of the eight spirits of the earth and then the god of the people as well as fathering the following nine gods:

1 Yar-lha Sham-po, from the union with Khu-za Khu-ma in Yarlung.
2 mChims-lha Than-tsho, with Kha-za Hor-sman in mChims.
3 dBye-lha sPyi-dkar, the elder,
4 Gro-lha Gang-bu, the younger, with Phyi-mo g.Yag-sngo-ma in dBye.
5 rTsang-lha (Pu)-dar, the elder,
6 rTsang-lha Bye'u, the younger, with Bya-za mThong-sman in rTsang.
7 Dvags-lha sGam-po, with Thang-nga-thang in Dvags-po.
8 Thang-lha Ya-bzhur, with Srin-za sByar-lcam-ma in Srin-yul(?).
9 Kong-lha De-yag, with Thang-nga Kong-mo-thang in Kong-po.[59]

Phyva-lha, No. II of the four brothers, leaves heaven to be the god of the Phyva. He has four sons and two daughters: (1) Phyva Mi-mkhyen chen-po, (2) Phyva-bu g.Yang-dkar, (3) Phyva-bu Brang-dkar, (4) Phyva-rje Zo-zo, (5) Phyva-lcam-ma, (6) Phyva-lcam 'Brug-mo.

Ya-lha bDal-drug, No.I of the four brothers, is the sovereign of all the Phyva gods. He resides on the thirteenth stage of heaven.

55. These four gods are made to be those of the four continents in Buddhist cosmology.
56. *Cf.* Stein, 1959: 57.
57. The spellings of the names of these gods vary, *cf.* Article No. 17, p. 266.
58. The *dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags* has 'Od-lde...and it is Ya-bla bDal-drug who has so many offspring (Article No. No. 17, p. 266.
59. The text here adds sGam lHa-bo lha-sras, making ten. The names of the nine mountain gods are different from one source to another, *cf.* Article No. 24.

With his consort, dMu-btsun Khri-sman, he begets seven sons and one daughter. (p.231) Three elder sons: Rong-rong rtsol-po, Khri-rga stag-gzig and Than-tsho zo-'brang. Three younger sons: lHe-rje Gung-rtsan, lHe-rje Thog-rtsan, and lHe-rje Zin-gdags. The middle one, i.e. the fourth, is Khri Bar-gyi bdun-tshigs. The eighth, the daughter, is Thang-nga lha-mo.[60]

Rong-rong rtsol-po with his consort dMu-za mThing-khug-sman, begets nine children who become the gods of Zhang-zhung: (1) Ge-khod, (2) Me-dur, (3) Tshangs-lha, (4) Pha-'brum, (5) rMa-tshes, (6) Pho-'brang, (7) rMa Ge-khod, (8) Yo-phyal, (9) (missing).

Khri-rga stag-gzig with his consort Glang-za Khri-ma, begets five children who become the gods of Sum-pa: (1) 'U-ral, (2) Cung-zungs, (3) A-gad, (4) I-gad, (5) Da-kyang.

Than-tsho zo-'brang with his consort 'Ol-ma-za sTong-sde-sman, begets children (the number is not mentioned) who become the gods of 'Ar-brgyad (?).

lHe-rje Gung-rtsan with his consort sTong-za Cho-cho-sman, begets seven children: (1) the god of the uphill (*mtho la rtsas*), (2) that of the downhill (*dma' gru rtsas*), (3) that of the local territory (*yul lha*), (4) that of the summit of the castle, i.e. the house roof, (5) the one who is outside, (6) the one who is inside, and (7) the one of the entrance.

lHe-rje Thog-rtsan with his consort begets nine offspring: (1) dPal-stong-rtse, (2) dPal-rdzing, (3) lHa-pho, (4) dPal-rta-pho, (5) dPal-mdung 'phrang-mdung, (6) dPal-che he-brag, (7) dPal-'bring lcang-'bring, (8) dPal-'jug ting-'jug, (9) (missing).

lHe-rje Zin-gdags with his consort gSal-'jon-ma, (p.232) begets six offspring: (1) Tshang-pa, the field god, (2) Byang-yug, the water god, (3) Mon-bu, the ground god, (4) Ka-ya rtsan-po, the interior god of (the father), (5) Mu-ya rtsan-mo, the interior goddess (of the mother),(6) Tshes-lha sMang-po, the god of the son.

From the sister Thang-nga lha-mo, ten goddesses descend including 'Khrig-mo who has nine sons.

Bar-gyi bdun-tshigs, the fourth of the seven sons of Ya-lha bDal-drug, is exiled to the dMu heaven, because he dislikes his father and three elder brothers above him and dislikes his mother and the three younger brothers below him. His father therefore orders him to go away to his uncle's, the dMu heaven, but he is reluctant to leave. So his father gives him various gifts so that he will consent to depart: the seven brothers of lHe'u rin-chen as his body-guards, the god Ga-ya and the godess Mu-ya as his *sku lha*, lHe-glang ru-dkar,

60. In *PT* 1285, a girl named Thang-nga brla-ma has several noblemen who are her contesting suitors (Lalou, 1958: 26).



the white horned ox and 'Phar-po 'phar-chung, the conch-shell.[61] So he leaves for Ngam-'brang lcang-'brang, the country of his maternal uncle dMu-rje btsan-po, situated on the seventh stage of heaven.

In the dMu heaven, he takes Dre dMu-dre btsan-mo as his consort, the elder of the three daughters of Thang-thang. From the union a boy is conceived who says to his mother from the womb: "Mother, if I come up, you may die, if I go down, I may be defiled, so please open out one of your backbones". He ascends his mother's spine passing along her right shoulder and then comes out from her nape. That is why he is called the 'nape-throned king' (gNya'-khri btsan-po).

Mi-bon lha-bon unites with the second daughter, Dre-btsun dMu-mo. From the union two brothers mTshe-mi gshen-gyi dmu-rgyal-tsha and gCo'u gshen-gyi phyag-mkhar were born.[62] (p.233)

Sa-lha mGon-bu takes the third daughter, Dre dMu-dre as his consort. They have a child who from the womb says to his mother: "If I come up you may die, if I go down, I may be defiled. Please open up your ribs!" So he was born from between her ribs. So he is called sKar-ma yol-lde,[63] the god of ribs (rTsib-kyi lha).

At that time, the nine 'fathers' (*pha dgu*) of the twelve principalities of Tibet are not united and are ruled by no-one. A council is held. One says : "We need to look for a true chief who is endowed with magic capabilities. Where could a person like that be?" Then a voice is heard saying: "If the black-headed Tibetan people wish to have a ruler, on the seventh stage of heaven, the place of dMu, in a gold castle with a turquoise roof, there is the Lord Khri Bar-gyi bdun-tshigs who is a descendant from the Phyva gods and a cousin of the dMu gods. Invite him to be your ruler!" So everybody accordingly agrees to invite him. Then the voice further says: "No one else can invite him but the god of the ribs, sKar-ma yol-lde, the son of Sa-bla mgon-bu". The latter is requested to go and invite him.

He says: "O Lord! (p.234), on earth down there, the country La-ga gling-drug, there is no ruler for the nine fathers of the twelve principalities. Everyone says he is a lord. In heaven where there is no yak, any animal which has a long horn would claim to be a yak!

61. In the myth of the fight between gShen-rab and the demon Khyab-pa lag-ring, gShen-rab pulls out of one of his teeth which transforms itself into an enormous conch-shell called by the same name. He blows it to stop the demon's wail, *cf. ZJ*, Vol.II, f.673 (Karmay, 1977, No.3).

62. The word *mtshe* often written as *'tshe* is also the name of a herb (*Ephedra*) and is associated with a myth and the rite of *sku glud* in another Dunhuang document (Thomas, 1957: 62 *et seq.*; Article No. 20, p. 341). While these specialists in rituals have the title of *bon po*, they are here described as *gshen* in Dunhuang documents.

63. Another god with the same name is already mentioned earlier.

If there were no water on earth, it would be too dry. If the horses had nothing to eat, it would be as if they were in a desert. Please come and be the ruler for those who have none. Come to be the master of the yaks which have no owners. Come to look after the animals which are helpless!"

The Lord replies: "Down there on earth there are various calamities, such as theft, poison, hatred, enemies, demons, lies, the *sri* spirit, the *btsan* spirit, imprecations, the crooked and yaks." The god of ribs insists: "For theft, there is a way of dealing with it; there is medicine against poison, love against hatred, friendship against enemy, god against demon, truth against lies, means of supressing the *sri* and *btsan* spirits, deliverance from imprecation, straight-forwardness against the crooked and weapon against yaks."

"You and I are related (being first cousins). The wood *se ba* burns well, the meat close to the bone tastes good, wool is warm for clothes (allusion to the idea of it being good to be with a relative). I beg you to come to be the ruler of those who have none and be the master of yaks which have no owners". The Lord agrees to come.

His father bestows on him the following gifts: a garment, seven brothers of lHe'u rin-chen for his body-guards, and an ox with white horns. His uncle gives him the dMu coat of mail, the dMu helmet, the dMu spear, the dMu shield, the dMu sword, the dMu ladder and the dMu cord. His mother gives him (p.235) the *gnyan* turquoise that shines,[64] fire that makes itself, water that fetches itself, mill-stones that grind themselves, a pan that helps itself to parch grains, a plate that helps itself to serve food and a loom that weaves itself. His father also gives him a conch-shell that blows itself, a bow that bends itself, an arrow that shoots itself, a coat of mail that helps to put itself on, a shield that helps to hold itself, a spear that pierces by itself, a cook called[65] lDum-bu, the priest for funeral rites and Nar-la, the priest for exorcising the spirits that cause unnatural death.

The descent of the Lord from heaven to his ultimate destination takes in twenty-seven places. It is known as *gshegs rabs nyi shu rtsa bdun* according to the Bon tradition of the *Yi ge lha gyes can*. This part is also called *stod lha rabs*, the 'story of the god's descent'. The twenty-seven places are :

1. The Lord begins to descend and undertakes a long journey over the nine summits and nine passes of mountains. When he is

64. In *SG*, it is the two ritual specialists mTshe and gCo who attach the turquoise representing the soul to the neck of the king (Article No.19, pp. 324-26).
65. The Tibetan word here is *phyag tshang pa*, 'attendant', 'cook'. In *PT* 1038, there are two with this function: Sha and sPug as in later sources, *cf. SG* (Article No.19, p. 325).



about to depart, the conch-shell is blown, the Bonpo mTshe-mi places the *mtshe* herb on his head and the Bonpo gCo'u phyag-mkhar hands over to him the sceptre.[66] Holding on to the dMu cord with his hands and stepping down the nine rungs of the dMu ladder, the Lord descends through the heavens.

2. After a while, the vault of heaven opens and the intermediate layer of clouds disperses, the Lord begins to see the earth. Among the mountains he perceives no other mountain is higher and more solid than lHa-ri Gyang-to;[67] among the plains, no plain is wider and better situated than Se-mo gru-bzhi in Kong-po; among the places, no place is better and more arable than Yar-mo rnam-bzhi; among the nomadic places, no place is better than Yar-'brog rnam- bzhi; among the rivers, no river is cleaner than the blue gTsang-po and Sham-chu. He then arrives at g.Yu-yul g.yam-khang from where he travels from one place to another in succession:
3. g.Yu-yul drang-po
4. g.Yu-yul bar-do
5. La-do, in the east. At this place (p.236), Go-gnyan pha-bong, the *gnyan* spirit of the rocks, stirringly salutes him. Shing-gnyan ser-skyer, the *gnyan* spirit of the trees, tremblingly salutes him. Lu-ma, the *gnyan* spirit of the blue waters, gushingly salutes him.[68]
6. Gyang-thog thog-yangs
7. Bla-'brum gyang-do[69]
8. Nags-ma bya-tshang-can
9. Shing mu-le grum-shing. At this place, the *srin* demons appear as his enemies. The *srin* (allusion to the people) of Nyang-po and Kong-po get together and come forward brandishing a red banner. So the seven brothers of lHe'u rin-chen assure the safety of the Lord. The white horned divine ox sharpens its horns and beats them. The conch blows itself, the coat of mail, the shield, the sword, the spear, the bow and the arrow all go into automatic action against the *srin* of Nyang-po and Kong-po who are killed. Mountain- sides are reddened with their flesh and lakes become brown with their blood.

66. *DChB* missed out this part of the story where gCo'u phyag-mkhar hands over the staff. It is mentioned in *JSChB*, pp.101-112.
67. Also written as Gyang-do. On its location, see Article No.14, pp. 220-23.
68. Similar descriptions of salutations from nature on his arrival are found in Dunhuang documents, *PT* 1286 (Bacot, 1940: 81).
69. This probably refers to Gyang-do bla-'bubs, *PT* 1287 (Bacot, 1940: 99).

The god sGam lHa-bo lha-sras says to him: "You have come here to be the ruler of this country. Let me now make the sun shine on this eastern side of the valley!" The god sGam lha-bo makes flow his 'seed-essence' into the womb of sTag-pa ting-rum, the consort of 'Od-grags. So the couple begets a son called Gung-gzigs. He is made the *lha bon* of the Lord. The lady Ma-ma Dro-zhal skyid-lding offers the Lord a butter lamp burning brightly in front of his eyes. Pha-ba Gro-lha skyid-rgyal gives him the *ru tshod snyar ren.*[70] The Lord then abandons his divine garment *bsille-ma* and puts on man's clothes. He abandons his ambrosia and begins to eat man's food. (p.237) He abandons his nectar and starts to take the ale *chang*, man's drink. He then goes to Mi-yul skyi-mthing,[71] the man's place.

10. mTsho dang-sko'i 'gram
11. Brag dmar-po
12. Bla-ma dangs-ma 'bring-bcu
13. Dog-mo dog-nyen
14. Nyag-nyi rgyab-dmar[72]
15. Dvags Yen-mkhar
16. Nga-la g.ya'-ma-gong
17. Dvags-yul shing-nag[73]
18. Bra-la sgo-drug. Here in a place called Bud-kyi bram-sna the Lord meets three ragged boys with feathers stuck in their clothes. They are sent there by the Mon as a bad omen. They are caught and taken, but their language cannot be understood. One is called lHo Na-ga-ber and another is called sNyags lCang-ka-ber. The third escapes and he goes to the Upper Nyang where he hides and later becomes the ancestor of the Nyang clan. The two boys who are with the Lord later become the ancestors of the lHo and sNyags clans.[74]
19. 'Bring-lung
20. Dre-nga bram-sna
21. lHa-lung stag-pa
22. Klu-mo spyang-pa
23. Yar-khyim sog-kha

70. The sense of this phrase remains unknown to me. *ru-tshod* is an old word meaning the knee.
71. For the location of this place, see Article No.14.
72. Nyag-nyi dvags-po in *PT* 1287 (Bacot, 1940: 111).
73. Mentioned in *PT* 1285 (Lalou, 1958: 26).
74. These certainly correspond to lHo and rNgegs in *PT*1038 and lHo-ris and brNgegs in *SG* (Article No.19, p. 325).



24. Khyim-bu gor-gor
25. rTsang thud-gsum
26. bTsan-thang sgo-bzhi
27. 'Phar-po zo-'brang[75]

After arriving in this place he begins to build the castle of Yum-bu bla-sgang. He then vanquishes the king of Sum-pa-shang.[76] (p.238) He gradually takes over the twelve principalities and finally becomes the Lord of men and master of horses.

The history of the royal period is divided into three parts: *stod lha rabs*, first, the 'story of the divine descent', *bar mnga' dar*, second, the 'apogee of the kingdom' and *smad gyes mdo*, third, the 'fall of the kingdom'. The 'secret Bon tradition' (*gsang ba bon lugs*) is a doctrine upheld by Va-mgo re-thong-can who is one of the six *mu stegs pa* groups, (that is to say non-Buddhist and Indian philosophical schools). On account of his fox hat and his having killed Re-thong he is called by that name.[77]

The tradition according to which the Lord descends from the demon *the'u brang* is a satirical criticism of the Lord, it is not suitable to talk about.

**(B)** *Grags pa chos lugs,* the 'Buddhist tradition that is known' according to which the origin of the king goes back to an Indian royal lineage.

This tradition is called *grags pa,* because it is known that the Lord descends from the gods of Abhāsvarā. In the Bon tradition, he descends from the gods of Kāmadhātu (p.239). Therefore the gods of Abhāsvarā are superior to those of Kāmadhātu. This Indian royal

75. The majority of these place names remain unidentified, but some are known to other Tibetans, *cf.* Chab-spel, 1987: 28-29.
76. The line *sum pa'i bon po a yong rgyal ba btul/* "A-yong rgyal-ba, the Bonpo of Sum-pa was subdued (by gNya'-khri btsan-po)" first occurs in *BTChB* (p.181) and then was repeated in several *chos 'byung* e.g. *DM* (p.30) and *YJChB* (p.42). It did not make sense to me, but now *DChB* shows that it has got nothing to do with a Bonpo of Sum-pa. However, Sum-pa-shang remains unidentified.
77. The author here seems to try to assimilate the Bonpo tradition of the myth with a story which is unknown to me. The versified text has simply *mu stegs 'dod pa mi bzung*, "view of the *mu stegs pa* not to be accepted", i.e. the Bonpo tradition of the myth, but the author of *DChB* interprets this referring to one of the six *mu stegs pa* (*ltar ka sde drug* ). Such a group with this name is not known nor does the name Va-mgo re-thong-can figure among the six Indian philosophers who are well known to have been vanquished by the Buddha. The word *mu stegs pa/can* which is a translation of the Sanskrit term *tīrthika* originally used to refer to Indian non-Buddhist philosophers (*cf.* Article No.9, n.8).

lineage is known in the *sūtra* and therefore the Buddhist tradition is called *grags pa*.

In the lineage of the Śākya clan, there are three: the first is Rāhula (sGra-gcan-'dzin), whose line does not continue; the second is Licchavī. This has three lines: the king gSal-rgyal of Kosala, the king 'Char-byed of Badsala and the king Bimbisāra of Magadha. The third is Ri-brag-pa which has two lines : dMag-brgya-pa (Dhṛtarāṣtra) and sKya-seng (Pāṇḍu). While dMag-brgya-pa has ninety-nine sons, sKya-seng has none. The two brothers are at war between each other. sKya-seng performs rites in order to have children. As a result of the rites, a *ṛṣi* bestows upon him five (p.240) boys of non-human origin. One of them, Tha-dkar, is ordered by the 'father' to exact revenge. He kills the ninety-eight sons of dMag-brgya-pa and the ninety-ninth son Ru-pa-skyes is captured, but instead of being executed, (p.241) he is banished, put into a box, and thrown into the river Ganges. The box is found by the herdsmen of the king Bimbisāra and they give it to the king who finds a handsome boy in it. The boy tells the king why he is banished. The king is aware of a prophecy and says: "O! you are the emanation of Mahākaruṇa. Be my chaplain!" The king keeps him in a secret place so that the boy may be protected from the Pāṇḍavas, but they also appreciate the prophecy about the boy and come along to invite him back with a great ceremony, but the boy, fearing that it could be a plot to kill him, runs away (p.242). He arrives on the Tibetan frontier.[78] There he meets the twelve wise men and the members of the six clans who are looking for someone who can be made their king. They find him very handsome, but they cannot understand each other. The boy points his finger towards the sky. So they say that he comes from heaven and putting him on their napes, make him their king. He is called gNya'-khri btsan-po.

The twelve wise men are A-mi ste-re, I-ma ye-shes and Tshul Yang-dgongs dge-'dun, etc. The members of the six clans are lHo, sNyags, Khu, sNubs, So and sPo.

As Ru-pa-skyes is the emanation of Mahākaruṇa, the Buddhist tradition is called *Grags-pa chos lugs*. The origin of the Lord is good since it originates in India and the place where he came to is good since it (lHa-ri Gyang-to) is at the confluence of the three waters in

78. This story of Buddhist tradition was probably the source for the account given in *ShDz* (Haarh, 1969: 190-91). Indian stories of different origins are inextricably mingled with this Buddhist tradition of the origin myth, such as the Brahmanic tradition of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas of the *Mahābhārata*, that of the Puranic tradition of the same epic, as well as stories of the famous kings contemporary with Buddha Sākyamuni. For a detailed study of this, see Haarh, 1969: 193-97.



Tibet,[79] the centre of earth, a country surrounded by snowy mountains and the source of the four rivers. Mount Ti-se symbolises a *stūpa* and Lake Ma-pang signifies a *maṇḍala* for spreading Buddhism in Tibet in the north. This is the *lha rabs* according to the Buddhist tradition. If one wonders how this story can be called *lha rabs,* it is because there is the story of the seven gods counting upwards from the king Mahāsaṃmata and (p.243) also it is prophesied in the *sūtra* that in the future Ru-pa-skyes, the emanation of Mahākaruṇa, would be born to dMag-brgya-pa. Since no god is better than Mahākaruṇa, this story can be called *lha rabs*.

**II.** The *Zangs ma bzhugs ral can* written by the 'subjects of the father' (*yab 'bangs*)[80]

(Here under the heading of the title just mentioned, the text simply contains a list of names of gods and demons including gNya'-khri btsan-po and their heavens. The places in which they reside indicate their association with celestial, atmospheric, terrestrial, underworld and other cosmic features of the universe).

1. 'Gro-rje legs-pa resides up in dGung-phub
2. gNam-lha dkar-gsum resides up in gNam-phub
3. sKar-ma yol-lde resides up in sPrin-phub
4. rGya-lha 'Brong-nam resides up in dGung-yol
5. 'O-de gung-rgyal resides up in gNam-yer
6. Ya-lha bDal-drug resides up in sTeng-mer
7. lDe gNya'-khri btsan-po resides up in Kha-yel
8. dMu-rje btsan-po resides up in dMu-zil
9. Sa-lha mGon-bu resides in Dog-mer
10. Dog-lha sMin-bu resides down in Zo-ro chen-po
11. Me-lha sMongs-bu resides down in Sa-mer
12. Sa-lha 'Khor-mo resides down in Sa-lhags
13. sTing-lha Gar-chen resides down in sTing-rum
14. bSang-lha De-ba resides up in bSang-gcig
15. bDud-rje chen-po resides up in Bar-snang.

(From here the text continues with the accounts of the successors of gNya'-khri btsan-po, which we have no intention of summarising in this article, as stated above).

79. For a geographical description of this place, see Article No. 14.
80. *JSChB*, pp.98-99. In place of this title *BZh* has *sPun po can* (p.75) whereas *NyChB* has *Yun po can* (p.497), but *DChB* does not mention it at all.

**III.** The *lTab ma dgu brtsegs can* (p.374)[81]

1. The palace where (p.375) the kings were born.
2. The identity of their fathers.
3. The length of their reigns.
4. The identity of their queens.
5. The number of their children.
6. The identity of their ministers.
7. The work they accomplished.
8. The number of years they lived.
9. The place where they died.

**IV.** The *Zing po mgo sngon can*

This is a work which contains all kinds of confused histories. (The author does not give any more details concerning this work).

**V.** The *gSang ba phyag rgya can* [82]

Which king was born blind? sTag-gu gnyan-gzigs.
Which king was leprous? 'Bro-gnyan lde'u-ru.[83]
Which king lived as if dead in a tomb? 'Bro-snyan lde'u-ru being leprous was so sad that he and two servants lived as dead in tomb.[84]
How many kings are there who were killed? There are ten:

1. Gri-gum btsan-po was killed by Lo-ngam on account of the fact that the *mkha' 'gro* spirit Legs-snying entered his heart and he wanted to challenge Lo-ngam without reason.
2. bTsan-srong was killed. He fell from his horse because he could not control his wild horse (p.376).[85]
3. lJang-tsha lHa-dbon was killed by sNyags Khri-bzang yang-ston (p.376), because Khri Srong-lde-btsan (742-797) was given the right to rule.[86]

81. *JSChB* (p.99) ascribes this text to *zhang blon*, ministers provided by the families of the maternal uncles of the kings, *cf.* Richardson, 1977: 17-18.
82. *JSChB* (p.99) attributes this text to a sKye-nam whose identity remains unknown.
83. This king is the father of sTag-bu gnyan-gzigs, see *DChB*, pp.150-52.
84. *DChB* (p.251) states that he lived alone in the tomb.
85. This probably refers to the king Khri 'Dus-srong (676-704) who is believed to have been killed when he was engaged in the campaign against 'Jang (*DChB*, p.300; *JSChB*, p.119), but *PT* 1288 has simply *dgung du gshegs*, 'departed for heaven' (Bacot, 1940: 40).
86. This would support the suggestion that this prince is identical with the *btsan po* gCen-lha Bal-po (*PT* 1288, Bacot, 1944: 40) who was deposed. He was the elder brother of the king Khri lDe-gtsug-btsan (Beckwith, 1983: 8-10), but he died a natural death in 739 A.D. (*PT* 1288, Bacot, 1940: 50-51). *DChB* (p.300) uses the expression *thang mtshams su phab pa*, literally 'brought down to the limit where the plain begins', an expression often used in *JSChB* to indicate that a prince is 'disqualified', 'discarded' or 'prevented' from claiming the throne(pp.104-8). *JSChB* (p.104) in fact explains the expression as *yan gar du gnang*, 'to discard', 'to put or leave aside'.



4. Mu-ne btsan-po (774-797) was killed by his mother through poison, because he sided with Pho-yong-bza' rGyal-mo-btsan.[87]
5. Khri lDe-srong-btsan (b.776) was shot in the dark and killed by Srag when the fire was put out and his horse got frightened.[88]
6. Mu-tig btsan-po (d.804) was killed by sNa-nam frightening his horse, because he persecuted Buddhism.[89]
7. Glang Dar-ma (reigned 836-842) was killed by lHa-lung dPal-gyi rdo-rje, because he persecuted Buddhism.[90]
8. gNam-ri 'Od-srung was killed by rTse-ro through poison, because his two queens quarrelled.[91]
9. mNga'-bdag dPal-'khor was killed by sNyags sTag-rtse, because the king banished a half of the sNyags people to gTsang and a half of the 'Dre people in gTsang to Yarlung.[92]
10. (missing)[93]

We now come to the end of our résumé. The author of *DChB* adds two more works as the standard historical works to the *Can lnga* following the versified text which has: *can lnga log gnon gsang ba yang chung phyed/* i.e. the five *Can*, the *Log gnon* and the *gSang ba yang chung*. The last one is counted as a 'half' (*phyed*) being concerned with the royal tombs (pp.376-80).

The author of *DChB* specifies that the *Log gnon* refers to the *Lo rgyus chen mo* written (*brtsams pa)* by the *dge bshes* Khu or Khu-ston.[94] His full name is Khu-ston brTson-'grus g.yung-drung.[95] It is therefore certain that this refers to the historical work known as *Lo rgyus chen*

87. *KhG* (f.126b, 2) has the same statement, but *JSChB* (p.133) states that he was killed due to differences between him and his mother about who should be appointed as ministers.
88. Both *DChB* (p.359) and *JSChB* (p.133) agree that he was killed, but they do not state why he was killed.
89. No other source gives this reason, not even *DChB* itself (p.359).
90. There is no early evidence that he really persecuted Buddhism as such, *cf.* Karmay, 1988a: 76-80, 1989.
91. Neither *DChB* (p.370) nor *JSChB* (p.143) state that he was killed.
92. *DChB* (p.371) states that he was killed by a Sham-po mchu-nag, but neither *DChB* nor *JSChB* (p.143) give any particular reason for the killing.
93. This may be King Ral-pa-can (805-836) who is known to have been assassinated (*DChB*, p.362; *JSChB* , 134). At any rate, this list is extremely confused both in the order and identites. I have made no attempt at working out all the dates of most of the personages mentioned in this list since no source gives them.
94. *DChB*, pp.227-, 375.
95. *KhG*, f.154b, 7.

*mo*[96] by the bKa'-gdams-pa monk Khu-ston brTson-'grus g.yung-drung (1011-1075), but *DChB* has not given any account of its contents and the work still has not come to light. The identity of rGya lHa-po who is presented as a co-author of the *Lo rgyus chen mo* by *DChB* remains unknown. On the other hand, Khu-ston was an eminent monk famed for his learning in *Abhidharma* and was a prominent disciple of Atīśa. It was he who invited the Indian master to bSam-yas. He taught in the monastery of Thang-po-che[97] where in 1207 the Kashmirian master made a computation as mentioned above.

As for the *gSang ba yang chung*, the author of *DChB* gives a short account of its contents, but no mention is made concerning its authorship (p.376). It is considered as an accessory to the work No.V of the *Can lnga*. It contains, according to *DChB*, an account of the burial practice in the sky, on the slate mountain, on the clay mountain, in between mountain and plain, in water, the construction of the tombs and the rows of their position, their names, and those of the royal persons who died abroad and who have no tombs in 'Phyong-rgyas and the queens who became Buddhist nuns buried in tombs in the form of *stūpa*, but not placed among the tombs on the burial ground (p.380).

## Conclusion

At the centre of our discussion has been a group of texts none of which has, in fact, come to light. The *Can lnga* are simply enumerated in *BZh*. By the mid-twelfth century the historical accounts contained in the *Can lnga* had undergone developments associated with such terms as *bsgrags pa bon lugs* and *gsang ba chos lugs* later referred to as the Bon and Buddhist traditions of the origins of the first Tibetan king. In later works, it is under these phrases that the early traditon of the origin myths are commented upon without referring to the existence of the *Can lnga*. In certain works like *SM* and *YJChB*, they are simply referred to as *bod kyi yig tshang*, the 'Tibetan records'. The *mkhas pa* lDe'u is therefore the first, as far as I know, to use the *Can lnga* extensively in his work. Other Tibetan authors of *chos 'byung* and *rgyal rabs* had neglected or ignored them except *ShDz* which manifestly draws its account of the myth from sources going back to the *Yi ge lha gyes can*, but involving much tampering with it. However, there is no means for judging to what extent lDe'u has reported faithfully. We noted that a certain number of Buddhist elements had ostensibly been brought in when he comes to dealing with the native myths.

96. This is not to be confused with a text of the same title found in the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*, *cf.* Blondeau, 1984: 81, 88.
97. *DNg* (Roerich, 1988:93-94).



Nevertheless, the *Can lnga*, as seen from its use by lDe'u, were early official accounts of the origin of the first king, the activities of his successors and other members of the royal house. The last king mentioned is dPal-'khor-btsan; they therefore must have been written either towards the end of the ninth or early tenth century. These works together with the *Lo rgyus chen mo* had formed a group of standard texts for the history of Tibet, at least by the twelfth century, within the bKa'-gdams-pa tradition, but as the later authors were only concerned with the history of their own schools, their interest in the actual history of Tibet in so early a period as the *Can lnga* would have presented was minimal at best. Consequently, the existence of the *Can lnga* passed totally into oblivion.

# The Soul and the Turquoise: a Ritual for Recalling the *bla*

While engaged in fieldwork among the Bonpo of Dolanji (Himachal Pradesh, India) in 1983, I was able to observe the performance of the ritual known as *bla bslu*, the 'repurchase of the soul'. In this article a certain number of myths and their relation to the ritual will be considered and at the same time an attempt will be made to trace the possible sources of this ritual in early periods as well as to show its social and religious functions, as reflected in popular beliefs among present-day Tibetan people.

**Tibetan theories concerning the 'soul'**

The Tibetan concept of soul has already been touched upon by several scholars.[1] F. D. Lessing was the first to devote an entire article on the subject: "Calling the soul: a Lamaist ritual".[2] In this study, he relies on a Chinese translation of a Tibetan text by Liu Li-ch'ien: *Bla-'gugs tshe-'gugs kyi cho-ga rin chen srog-gis* (sic) *chang-mthung* (sic). Lessing translated the title as the "Ritual (Skt. *vidhi* ) for calling the soul and for calling life". However, a more appropriate translation would be: "The restoration (*chad mthud* and not *chang mthung* as Lessing has it) of precious life: the ritual for recalling the soul and life". According to the Chinese translator, the text was written by Thu'u-bkvan Chos-kyi nyi-ma. Lessing identified the author as Thu'u-bkvan Blo-bzang Chos-kyi nyi-ma (1732-1802). He was right since the text can be found among the latter's complete works.[3] Even though this dGe-lugs-pa author does not indicate his source, the text is in fact based on a rNying-ma-pa text ascribed to sGeg-pa'i rdo-rje and later reformulated by Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho (1818-1899).[4] Lessing wondered whether the Tibetan author had omitted the term *bslu ba* (to ransom) in his title because it did not correspond to the Sanskrit expression: *mṛtyu-vāñcana*, 'cheating death'. In fact, *mṛtyu-vāñcana* is translated by *'chi ba bslu ba* (to ransom the death) and not as *bla bslu*. It is important to stress here that *'chi bslu* and *bla bslu* are two distinct rituals, both in theory and practice, even though their purpose is the same: to avoid unnatural death. Lessing was mistaken

1. Stein, 1957; Snellgrove, 1967: 27-28; Tucci, 1973: 242-47.
2. Lessing, 1951.
3. Gedan sungrab minyam gunphel Series, Vol.VII, Delhi, 1971 (*Collected Works*, Vol.7, No.XXXV, pp.605-616).
4. See n.50.



in thinking that the origin of the *bla bslu* ritual was Indian. The Tenjur includes several texts concerning the *'chi bslu,* of which certain translations date as far back as the eleventh century, such as No. 1748,[5] but it does not contain any work on the *bla bslu* .

Although the term *bla* is generally translated 'as 'soul',[6] it has many other meanings. For instance, in the Sanskrit-Tibetan dictionary, the *Mahāvyupatti*,[7] compiled around A.D. 815, , it is used to translate the Sanskrit term *pati*, 'king', 'lord', .'master', 'owner', and also means 'superior', 'from above'.[8]

Ever since Buddhism became established in Tibet during the eighth century, the notion of *bla* - already present in early beliefs - lost some of its significance, inasmuch as Buddhism theoretically does not recognise the existence of such an entity in living beings. For Buddhists, the continuity of samsaric transmigration consists of an ever-changing principle situated in the consciousness (*rnam shes, vijñāna*). Hence, the *Mahāvyutpatti* does not define this word as *bla* ('soul'). Furthermore, the Sanskrit term *ātman,* which essentially means soul, has always been translated by *bdag*, 'self'. The new religion, however, never succeeded in completely suppressing the notion of soul. Over the centuries it was gradually assimilated and integrated into popular rites even though it contradicted Buddhism's fundamental doctrine of the non-existence of *ātman*.

**The *bla* as an element of a triad**

The *bla* is conceived of as a support upon which the physiological and intellectual aspects of life rest. It is thus considered the most important of the three physiological principles, which also include 'respiratory breath' (*dbugs*) and 'vital force' (*srog*). 'Vital force' is as essential as the *bla*, but 'respiratory breath' is perishable and therefore temporary in comparison with the *bla*. As life principle the *bla* pervades all parts of the body, but it depends upon 'respiratory breath' and cannot function without it. The *bla* is also regarded as one of the three intellectual principles together with 'thought' (*yid* ) and 'mind' (*sems* ).[9]

The three intellectual principles remain difficult to analyse since the sources themselves do not always refer to them in the same terms. They are related to the physiological principles and derive from the

5. Tōhoku Nos. 1702, 2839, 3495, 3496, 3504.
6. For the Tibetans there is only one soul for each person. For other peoples, there are several, for example, the Tamang speak of five, *cf.* Steinmann, 1987; twenty-one 'esprits vitaux' for the Cambodians, *cf.* Porée-Maspero, 1951.
7. *T* Vol.144, No.5832 (Sakaki, 1916-26).
8. *Ibid.*, 3704, 3710, 3690(61), 3699 (30), 1509.
9. *ZJ*, Vol.Ga, chapter 10, *Srid gshen theg pa* (Snellgrove, 1967: 116, 120, 160).

Buddhist theory of the 'basis of consciousness' (*kun gzhi rnam shes, ālayavijñāna*). According to the *Klu 'bum*, a Bonpo text, when the 'mind' has been 'spiritually' purified, 'thought' escapes and the *bla* wanders about aimlessly.[10] It then goes on to say that both 'thought' and the *bla* must be recaptured, for even if the 'mind' has been purified, the presence of the two other elements is required in order to accumulate wealth and power (*long spyod dang dbang thang 'phel ba* ).

In later tradition, in order to become a priest and perform the rites, especially funerary rites, thorough knowledge of the three intellectual principles was considered essential.[11] According to other sources, the *bla* is the magical emanation (*cho 'phrul*) of 'thought' which represents the discursive activity (*'phro 'du* ) of the 'mind'. Their relation is explained by the following images: the 'mind' is like fire, 'thought' is like the light of fire, and finally, the *bla* itself is like smoke.[12] At death, the three entities disperse: 'mind' disappears into the sky; 'thought' hides in the 'basis of consciousness', and the *bla* is carried away by evil spirits (*gshed ma 'dre*).[13] When the priest performs the funeral rite he must first comfort the *bla* which has been not only frightened by its ultimate separation from the body, but also abducted by evil spirits. The priest must then purify 'thought' from the defilement that has accumulated in the 'basis of consciousness' where it hides. As for the 'mind', the priest must lead it to the sky, for its nature is like that of the sky. As a result of this ritual, the *bla* finally dissolves (*thim*) into 'thought' which in turn dissolves into the 'mind'; the latter, being of the same nature as the sky, is empty and exists within itself.[14]

Although this tradition claims to know the ultimate state of the soul, it does not explain its creation. This question is rarely raised in the

10. *gTsang ma klu 'bum dkar po*, Derge edition, f.66a,4: *sems rnam par dag pas yid 'bros pa dang 'khyams pa...*
11. Shar-rdza bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan (1859-1934), *gSang ba sngags kyi bsnyen sgrub las gsum rnam par 'byed pa lha gnyan shel sgong* in *gSang sngags khrid dang smon lam rnam gsum sogs kyi 'grel ba*, Himachal Pradesh, 1973, pp.194-95 (Karmay, 1977, No.99.I); *cf.* also Kvaerne, 1985: 23-25.
12. Dre-ston rGyal-mtshan-dpal (c.14th century), *bKa' lung spyi'i grel ba bon sgo gsal byed* in *Bonpo grub mtha' material*, Himachal Pradesh, 1978, p.250: *bla ni yid kyi cho 'phrul yin/ yid ni sems kyi 'phro 'du yin/ sems ni kun gzhi'i bdal khyab yin/...me sems kyi dpe 'od yid kyi dpe du ba bla yi dpe ces so/*
13. Hor-btsun bsTan-'dzin blo-gros (1889-1975), *Du tri su yi gson gshin gnyis kyi lag len* (a manuscript scroll kept in the library of the Bonpo Monastery in Dolanji). The author quotes from a text entitled: *Mo 'dur* the follwing passage: *sems ni nam mkha'i dbyings su yal/ yid ni kun gzhi'i bag la zha/ bla ni gshed ma 'dre yis khrid/...*
14. *Ibid.*: *'dur ba bla yi 'jigs skrag 'dur/ sbyong ba yid kyi bag chags sbyong/ spar ba sems nyid dbyings su spar/...bla ni yid (la) thim/ (yid ni) sems la thim/ sems ni nam mkha' (dang) 'dra ste stong pa'o*. This last passage is cited from a text entitled *'Dur rgyud*.



texts. In *ZM*, however, the creation of the soul is described, even though the concept is not directly referred to as 'soul' or even as 'consciousness', but as the 'mind in itself' (*sems nyid*).[15] The passage containing this description is well known to Tibetologists,[16] but it is important to review it briefly since it describes the conception of the future master gShen-rab Mi-bo which is divided into three stages:

1) The 'mind' descended in the form of a white light like an arrow. At that moment the father dreamt that a white A syllable had entered his sinciput. 'Thought' descended in the form of a ray, round like a spindle, and the mother dreamt that a red HA syllable had entered her sinciput.
2) The white light arrived in the 'conch ocean' (the brain), then descended the 'swastika ladder' (the spine), and reached the male organ (*sta*). The red ray arrived in the 'conch ocean', continued towards the 'sardonyx mountain' (*mchong*, the heart), then crossed the 'forest' (the lungs) and reached the matrix.
3) The 'mind' in its causal state, in the form of white light like a crystal spark residing in the male organ, united with 'thought' in its causal state, in the form of vermilion red inside the womb. The union of these two opposites took the form of a luminous needle, white at the point, red at the root and green in the middle: this was the 'mind in itself' (*sems nyid* ).

This corresponds to the very first stage of embryonic formation. In my opinion, the author did not want to use the term *bla* for such an important personage as gShen-rab Mi-bo of his tradition. The word *sems nyid* seemed more appropriate in this context. In texts dealing with cosmogony, the concept of light (*'od*) as the male opposed to that of a ray (*zer*) as the female is a recurring theme. I have already discussed this subject in another article[17] and will simply recall here that the arrow and the spindle are often used to symbolize man and woman.

In popular thinking, the *bla* is considered essential for the welfare and integrity of human life. Incoherent behaviour in a person is often ascribed to an absence of the *bla* from the body, which implies that the departure of the *bla* is not always voluntary. In such cases, the person who has lost his soul often becomes ill. Thus, the *bla* is mobile. It does not always remain in the same place and is considered vulnerable. It is connected to life itself but one can live on for a while after it has left the

15. Vol.I, chapter III, f.51-53 (Francke, 1924: 284).
16. Stein, 1957: 212.
17. Article No.17.

body. However, the *bla* is not perishable; it is regarded as the 'vital force' of life (*bla srog*). Life (*tshe*) is associated with 'respiratory breath' (*dbugs*); when it ceases the *bla* remains temporarily either in the body or elsewhere and is said to possess its own light. It can also leave the body (*bla 'khyams pa*) as a result of a frightening event or unbearable pain. In such cases, it must be recalled (*bla bod*)[18] or ordered back (*bla 'gugs*) by means of a ritual. In any event, it is believed that as soon as it has definitively left the body, the person deprived of it becomes physically weak and mentally perturbed.

The *bla* may dwell, temporarily at least, in various places outside the body without risking any danger. Hence the expression *blas gnas*, 'dwelling of the soul',[19] a place where the *bla* takes up residence. It can be a rock or a boulder (*bla rdo*), a tree (*bla shing*), a lake (*bla mtsho*) or a mountain (*bla ri*). These places are often considered as sacred. It is probable that at some time in the past certain persons, especially of high social rank in the society, were able to choose the dwelling of their soul which eventually ceased to be that of a single person and become that of the entire community. Thus a certain number of mountains and lakes are designated as *bla ri* and *bla mtsho*, such as Mount Ti-se (Kailash) and Lake Ma-pang (Manasarowar) among the Bonpo.[20] The Buddhist historian dPa'-po gTsug-lag phreng-ba (1504-1566) mentions a hill on the Tibet-China border known as the *bla ri* of Tibet (*bod kyi bla ri*): it is said to have 'collapsed' (*'gyel*) following the persecution of Buddhism in the ninth century.[21] In addition to the expression *bla gnas*, the *bla rtags*, the 'emblem of the soul', is represented by certain animals. As we shall see later,[22] the number of animals varies from one tradition to another.

Within the body, the *bla* is located in the heart, but certain texts mention that it moves from one part of the body to another according to the time of day and month.[23] In medical texts, one of the pulses is called *bla rtsa*, the 'soul pulse' and is considered to be its abode.[24]

18. The ritual text of *bla 'bod* is in the work of Yar-lung Chos-ldan-pa (n. 50, No.iii, 551-52).
19. Another term: *bla khyim*, see *Ge sar 'jang gling g.yul skor*, Delhi, 1965, pp.246, 248; see also dMar-rong dBang-chen nyi-ma (the beginning of 20th century), *sMan lis*, f.10a,1; 11,a,2 (MS of the David-Néel collection, Musée Guimet, Paris).
20. *DzG*, pp.493, 594 (Karmay, 1977, No.2, 5).
21. *KhG*, f.136a,6, 137b,4.
22. See n.74.
23. Nyang-ral Nyi-ma 'od-zer (1124 or 1136-1204), *dMod pa drag sngags mthu'i spyi sdom srid pa'i gter khyim chen mo* (*RT*, Vol.32, Gi), f.41b.
24. *bla rtsa gnas sa bla tshe mal du gnas/* (*rGyud bzhi, bDud rtsi snying po yan lag brgyad pa gsang ba man ngag gi rgyud*, Dharamsala, 1971, *Phyi rgyud*, p.27); *bla dang 'dra bar 'khyams pa ni bla rtsa ste/ de la mi'i bla gnas pa'o/* "Wandering about like the soul, hence it is called *bla rtsa*. Man's soul dwells there" (*'Grel ba 'bum chung gsal sgron nor bu'i 'phreng mdzes* by Sum-pa Jñânadhara in *sMan gzhung cha lag bco brgyad*, Varanasi, text CA, p.93); *cf.* also Meyer, 1981: 125.



The *bla* is considered vulnerable and liable to be seduced by all sorts of gods (*lha*) and demons (*'dre*) who take it hostage, hence the idea of buying it back (*bla bslu*) with a ransom (*bla glud*). Midnight is said to be the time when the *bla* especially wanders off in dreams and is therefore most likely to be seized by gods or demons. Very often the 'local deities' (*yul lha*) are held responsible.[25] In certain rNying-ma-pa texts ascribed to Padmasambhava and devoted to the practice of black magic, it is said that midnight is the time when the *bla* roams (*nam gyi gung la 'khyams pa'i dus*) and that the messenger of action must be sent (*las kyi pho nya rbad pa*) to capture it. According to this text, human life is composed of three elements: the *bla*, the heart (*snying*), and 'vital force' (*srog*). In the same text, the use of magic to kill one's enemy is discussed. This passage, in my view, clearly illustrates the Tibetan concept of the *bla*:
"If one practices magic what does one kill, the body or the 'mind'? The body is made of matter. Even if it is killed, it does not die. As for the 'mind', it is empty and therefore there is nothing to kill. Neither the body nor the 'mind' is killed. It is the *bla*, which wanders like a sheep without a shepherd, that must be summoned".[26]

As indicated by the following passage from a Dunhuang manuscript on divination, the notion that the soul may be seduced and taken away by spirits goes back to the royal period: [27]

"Oh! To heaven of the gods and that of the gNyan,
Would he gladly go!
But the demon of the earth, Dun-'phyam,
Cuts off the road at the very base (and)
Leads away his 'soul of the body'[28]
To (the land) sDig-dgu sngon (ngan)-dgu.
For this reason his Phyva[29] runs off and his happiness fades away.

25. *'Dren mchog dam pa dpal ldan blo gros kyi rnam thar dad gsum sgo 'byed* (Snellgrove, 1967, Vol.I, p.28; Vol.II, p.III, 42).
26. *Srid pa'i gter khyim sgron me*, f. 6a: *mthu byed na lus gsod dam sems gsod/ lus brdos pa can bem po 'di bsad kyang mi 'chi/ sems stong pa la bsad rgyu ci yod. zhe na/ lus sems gnyis ka mi gsod de/ bla lug rdzi bo med pa bzhin du 'khyams pa ste...bkug ste/* An anonymous work.The copy I possess has no indication concerning its place and date of publication.
27. *PT* 1051(Spanien, Imaeda, 1978, Pl.350, ll.19-23).
28. The manuscript reads *sku'i ni bal*, but I think it is a scribe's error for *bla* and should be read as *sku'i ni bla*, 'soul of the body' which refers to *ya bla*, 'soul up in heaven', i.e. the 'ancestral spirits' (*mtshun*), for example, the chief of the Phyva, Phyva-rje Ya-bla bdal-drug who often has the title: mGon-mtshun. As this Phyva is a deity he is often called *ya lha*, hence the spelling *sku lha* in later texts, *cf.* n.65, also Article No.17, n.25; Macdonald, 1971: 272-81; 295-309; Stein, 1983: 200-205.
29. *Cf.* Article No.17, n. 9.

How humble and weak he is!
This has fallen on the Ma-ha Demon's divination(who says):
No matter what I eat, I am never sated.
No matter what I drink, I am never satisfied.
And now since I have found you,
Do not believe you can escape me!
(As for your life),
In the heavens, the year has come to an end,
On earth, day has come to an end,[30]
You, man, eat what I offer you
And wear what I give you!"
It is as if a great evil spirit had taken away the soul. (The result of) the divination is not good..."

I have already discussed the *bla* as life principle that must be preserved within the body, for its definitive loss usually results in death. This theme can be found in another Dunhuang manuscript which I will briefly summarise here:

"The deity mGon-mtshun-phyva has a son named lHe'u Yang-ka-rje whose mother is a daughter of Demons. Yang-ka-rje challenges his maternal uncles to a horse race and thus provokes their discontent. They finally cause his death (*grongs gyis* [*kyis*] *myed*). The following day, the father notices that his son does not rise. He asks him why he is sad (*ci la thugs chad*) and promises him a castle (*mkhar*), fields and domestic animals if he rises. The son does not react. The father then closely examines his son's body and notices that his eyes are bluer than a river (*spyan bltas na mtsang* [*gtsang*] *bas sngo*) and that his skin is whiter than silk (*sha bltas gyis* [*kyis*] *dar bas dkar*). The father then summons a Bon expert (*bon mkhas*), the priest gSas-drag-me. Holding the boy on his knees for three days, the priest tries to bring him back to life, cover him, recall his soul and open his eyes, but his condition does not improve. He dies".[31]

In later texts, we come across the idea that the *bla* can be restored even after death by means of a magic rite:

30. The expressions *gnam la ni lo zad/ sa la ni zhag zad/* are parallel to those of *gnam la zla thim/ sa la zhag thim/* 'In the heavens, the month faded, on earth, the day faded'. There is another similar expression: *lo zad zla zad*, 'the exhaustion of the month and year', i.e. the 29th day of the 12th month, *cf.* Khad-smad bSod-nams dbang-'dus, *rGas po'i lo rgyus 'bel gtam*, Dharamsala, 1982, p.35.

31. *PT* 1134 (Spanien, Imaeda, 1978, Pl.462, ll.67-84; Lalou, 1957: 89-92; Stein, 1971: 492-93).





*Plate 30: Tibetan Women wearing turquoises on their heads. Lhasa (SGK 1995)*

"In the eighth century, during Khri Song-lde-bstan's persecution of the Bon religion, a magic contest between the Bonpo and the Buddhists was held. The King said: "First there must be a competition between the Buddhists and the Bonpo in order to determine who are the most powerful. You Bonpo priests must use your magic skills to kill the Buddhist spokesman Śākyaprabha of Rung. You, Padmasambhava and other Buddhists, must prevent Bonpo magic from killing Śākyaprabha". Śākya loses consciousness and dies. The King then asks Padmasambhava: "Śākya is dead, is it because his life has come to an end or is it because of Bonpo magic?" Padmasambhava replies: "Either his *karma* is finished or he had no more life left to live. He was an old man." The King then said to the Bonpo: "Whether you are powerful magicians or whether his life has indeed come to an end as the Buddhists claim, he is dead. Now he must be brought back to life!". No sooner had the King spoken than the Bonpo stopped the messenger of Yama, Lord of Death, on his way and broke Yama's 'wooden tablet' by performing the *lHa srin tshong zlog*[32] ritual. Once his soul was retrieved, Śākya was brought back to life. The King asked Śākya: "Where have you been? What have you seen?" (Śākya replied) "I had the feeling I was being chased. I fell asleep. In my dream I was carried away by a man with dark

32. This ritual text is at present not available. Another similar work is mentioned in the text under study, *see* n. 81.

complexion on a black horse. We reached the top of a pass. Before us, I saw a very welcoming land. There, a white man with white complexion told me: "Your time to be here has not yet come" There were a great many men with white complexion on white horses holding banners and spears. They said they were gods; they told me to go back. Then I woke up".[33]

## Turquoise: Symbol of the Soul

If there is one stone that has always played an important role in Tibetan culture from the royal period to the present, it is definitely turquoise. Not only is it regarded as a precious stone and beautiful ornament, but it is also believed to possess certain mystical properties. Its function as an ornament is twofold: on the one hand, it is the symbol of the soul (*bla g.yu*); on the other, it is a token of love.

In the *bla bslu* ritual, it is the chief officiant who ties the *bla g.yu* around the devotee's neck. The latter must care for it as much as possible, for its loss or damage could affect his own soul. Turquoise is known to change colour during the day according to the surrounding light.[34] Its paleness is often seen as a bad omen. I will discuss this aspect later, in relation to the role of turquoise in the myths as well as in the rituals themselves.

In marriage rites, the woman offers a turquoise to the man as a token of love whereas the man offers her a gold coin (*bla gser*).[35] In other texts, it is the man who gives the turquoise called *gtsug g.yu* or *thod g.yu*, the 'head turquoise' which is attached to the woman's head, while another person sings its praise (*g.yu bshad*).[36] The *gtsug g.yu* is the ornament most closely associated with women and constitutes a gauge of her faithfuness to her partner. The following poem illustrates this point:

"My thoughts are with you, friend of my life.
If you have no modesty and feel no shame,
Your head turquoise

33. *SG*, pp.116-19; *cf. LShDz* (Karmay, 1972: 180-81).
34. The turquoise is considered as a medicinal substance. In certain medical texts, one speaks of eight kinds of turquoises. Two out of the eight are particularly known for their bright colour: "the *drug dkar* is blue and white and shines brilliantly. It can be seen in the dark" (*sngo zhing dkar la bkrag mdangs che la mun par mthong ba de drug dkar*); "the *drug dmar* is soft and blue with great reddish brilliancy (*sngo zhing dmar mdangs che la snum pa drug dmar*), see *DSh*, p.85. For a geological study, see Walker-Watson, 1983: 16-18. *Cf* also Laufer, 1913-14: 5-20; Jest, 1985: *passim*.
35. See the marriage ritual in Article No. 8.
36. rDo-ring bsTan-'dzin dpal-'byor, *dGa 'bzhi ba'i mi rabs kyi byung ba brjod pa zol med gtam gyi rol mo*, Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1987, Vol.I, pp.253-54; P. W. Barshi, *gNa' rabs bod kyi chang sa'i lam srol*, Dharamsala, 1979, pp.7-8, 32.



Cannot speak".[37]

In the Gesar epic, during the campaign against the Hor, Gur-dkar, king of the Hor, sends four birds to different countries in quest of a wife. The blackbird who is the soul-bird (*bla bya*) of the Hor flies over Tibet and eventually reaches Gling, Gesar's birthplace. There, he notices 'Brug-mo, Gesar's wife, in the company of two girls combing her hair. The blackbird is deeply impressed by 'Brug-mo's beauty and succeeds in stealing the turquoise she had removed from her forehead (*thod g.yu*) and put aside in order to set her hair. The blackbird then returns to Hor and gives the king the turquoise. He tells him of 'Brug-mo's beauty. Later 'Brug-mo is then kidnapped and, for a time, becomes the wife of Gur-dkar, King of the Hor and Gesar's enemy.[38]

Even today turquoise is still a source of literary inspiration: a long novel by dPal-'byor simply entitled *gTsug g.yu* has recently been published in Lhasa.[39]

The combination of gold and turquoise is very common not only in ornaments, but also in popular rituals as offerings. This combination is mentioned in many early documents,[40] and it is worth describing how gold and turquoise are used together in certain Bonpo rituals. According to the instructions given in one of the ritual texts, "the ritual is to be chanted while chewing the gold and the turquoise".[41] In practice, the officiant keeps a gold coin inside his right cheek and a turquoise inside his left cheek; these two objects are respectively referred to as the 'mouth gold' (*kha gser*) and the 'mouth turquoise' (*kha g.yu*). The meaning behind this practice, however, is not made clear. According to Tenzin Namdak, it marks the 'importance' of the rite performed by the officiant. This is more or less confirmed by the following statement from *ZM*: "the gold and turquoise of the mouth are symbols of Wondrous Speech".[42] However, *kha gser* and *kha g.yu* also refer to beer (*chang*) and tea offerings. The tea, poured in a receptacle containing a gold coin, is known as the 'gold

37. *gtan grogs khyod la bsam pa'i/*
*khrel dang ngo tsha med na/*
*mgo la rgyab pa'i gtsug g.yus/*
*skad cha bshad ni mi shes/*
*Rig 'dzin tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho'i gsung mgur dang gsang ba'i rnam thar*, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1981, p.10, No.26.
38. Ngag-dbang bstan-'dzin phun-tshogs, *'Dzam gling ge sar rgyal po'i sgrung/ Hor gling g.yul 'gyed*, Lhasa, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1980, pp.2-7.
39. Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1985.
40. E.g. IOL No.730 (De la Vallée Poussin, 1962).
41. *de nas dbu la thod bcing/ kha gser kha g.yu zhal du mur/ gser dang g.yu yi sgron me bteg/ mda' dar phyar la 'di skad do/*, "Then put on the turban on the head; chew in the mouth the *kha gser* and *kha g.yu*; offer the gold and turquoise lamps; flourish the ritual arrow" (*KS*, p.280; Karmay, 1977, No.30, 10).
42. *kha gser kha g.yu ngo mtshar bka' yi rtags* (Vol.II, chapter XIV, f.287).

beverage' (*gser skyems*) while the *chang*, poured in a receptacle containing a turquoise, is called the 'turquoise beverage" (*g.yu sngon*).

In one myth, the giant deity Ge-khod is compelled to kill his mother, originally a she-demon, because she has returned to the Demons. The Demons and Gods are engaged in an eternal cosmic battle against each other, but Ge-khod feels such remorse over his matricide that he puts the sun inside his right cheek and the moon inside his left cheek. He then falls asleep in his citadel until the tiny deity Ku-byi mang-ke succeeds in freeing the planets.[43]

The relation between this myth and the ritual practice of placing a piece of gold and a turquoise inside the mouth remains obscure, especially since the moon is not at all associated with turquoise. Yet it is impossible to overlook the strange parallel between the two cases.

The association between turquoise and the soul is implied in the ancient documents. The breaking of turquoise is especially associated with the death of a leader:

> "The lord is no longer here, for he is dead. The turquoise is no longer here for it is broken" .[44]

Again:

> "The lord is kind but he is dead. The turquoise is good but broken. The lord's death comes (from the siniciput), the breaking of the turquoise comes from the head".[45]

Thus the practice of attaching a turquoise to the head or to some other part of the upper body goes back to fairly ancient times. That turquoise was already then considered a symbol of the soul is clear in the above quotations from early documents and in the myth of the first Tibetan king which I shall discuss below.

## The mythical precedents of the *bla bslu* ritual

Two brief Bonpo texts concerning the *bla bslu* ritual are known to us. Both texts were composed by Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin (b.1813) for practical purposes. The one entitled *Tshe yi g.yung drung*, summarised below, is included in a volume devoted to the ritual of Tshe-dbang mchog-'dus.[46] The purpose of the ritual is to prolong life and it relies on Tshe-

43. On this myth see Article No.21.
44. *rje ni grongs gis (kyis) myed/ g.yu ni grugs kyis myed/* (*PT* 1134, Spanien, Imaeda, 1978, Pl.464, l.135). Also in the same manuscript: *grongs rje grongs gis (kyis) myed/ grugs g.yu grugs gis (kyis) myed/* (*cf.* Stein, 1971: 492-93).
45. *rje ni dphan (phan) te na (ni) nongs g.yu ni bzang (ste) grugs rje grongs ni g (tsug) las grongs g.yu grugs ni dbu las grugs/*(IOL, Ia, ll.32-33, 122-24; Thomas, 1957: 10, 15).
46. This ritual is also called *Tshe dbang bya ri ma*. It is found in the volume of *rGyal gshen bru'i ring lugs gsang sngags cha lag nyer mkho sna tshogs bsdud pa'i gsung pod*, Himachal Pradesh, 1973, Nos.15-25. Out text, *Bla bslu tshe yi g.yung drung* is No.25 in this volume. Another edition of *Tshe dbang mchog 'dus* is included in the



dbang rig-'dzin, a legendary sage and here presented as the main deity of the ritual.[47]

The other text, entitled *Tshe 'gug srog gi chad mthud*, was written in 1852 in the monastery of sMan-ri and is included in a compilation of texts devoted to the cycle of the deity Me-ri of Zhang-zhung.[48] Neither text provides any indication of the mythical precedent justifying the ritual action and its effectiveness. I have touched upon this subject elsewhere.[49] The latter text contains a story about Ge-khod but it does not pertain to the soul (pp.293-94).

These two texts are fairly recent. Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin does not mention his sources. He says he wrote the first after he had a vision in a dream and the second at the request of a devotee (p. 300). This suggests that the Bonpo may have lost the original texts. In any event, I found no other text of the same kind in the Bonpo monastery of Dolanji during my stay there in 1983.

The rNying-ma-pa seem to have preserved their early tradition better than the Bonpo, at least as far as the texts on the *bla bslu* ritual are concerned.[50] Thus *RT*, a vast collection of texts devoted to rituals and compiled by Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mstho (1818-1899), includes several works on the *bla bslu*. The longest and therefore the most detailed one is the *Srog gi btsan rdzong*, composed by Kong-sprul himself.[51] The

volume of *Tshe dbang rgya gar ma*, Delhi, 1973 (Karmay, 1977, No.45). This ritual text is considered as oral tradition from the master Khod-po Blo-gros thogs-med (b.1280), p.226 (of the volume of *Tshe dbang rgya gar ma*). *Cf* also *LShDz* (Karmay, 1972, p.340, l.3).

47. For a detailed analysis of the teachings associated with Tshe-dbang rig-rig-'dzin, see Blondeau, 1985.
48. *Zhang zhung me ri bka' gter gnyis kyi sgrub skor*, Delhi, 1973 (Karmay, 1977, No.35,12).
49. *Cf.* Article No.17.
50. *RT*, Vol.77 (Ji):
    - i. *sGeg rdo lugs kyi bla bslu bcu gsum ma'i chog bsgrigs bklags pas kun shes go gsal du bkod pa srog gi btsan rdzong* (ff..495-525) by Padma gar-dbang blo-gros mtha'-yas pa'i-sde *alias* Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho (*cf.* n.51).
    - ii. *Bla bslu 'chi bdag g.yu las rgyal ba slob dpon chen pos gnang ba* (ff..529 38) 'given' by Padmasambhva.
    - iii. *Bla bslu 'chi med rig 'dzin* (ff.545-53) written by Yar-lung sprul-sku Chos-ldan-pa at Yum-bu bla-mkhar. A note (f.5a) is added, apparently by Kong-sprul, stating that this author is one of the five who took care the teachings (*chos bdag*) of Guru Chos-dbang (1212-1270).
    - iv. *Slob dpon padma 'byung gnas kyis mdzad pa'i bla bslu tshe 'gugs*, attributed to Padmasambhava and 'rediscovered' by Padma gling-pa(1450-1521). I have summarised this last text and compared it to the Bonpo text below.
51. This work is a veritable mixture of Buddhist, Bonpo and astrological elements. This kind of synthesis is quite current in Kong-sprul's writings. He states that his work was based on an old text by sGeg-pa'i rdo-rje, thereby trying to give an aura of authenticity to his work. If there was such an old text, one wonders why he did not

work, however, does not make any reference to the ritual's mythical origin. On the other hand, the *'Chi bdag g.yul rgyal,* which caught the attention of G. Tucci,[52] relates the following myth:

"A long time ago the master Padmasambhava subdued all the gods and demons of Tibet, and the Tibetan kingdom was thus saved. But one of the demons remained unsubdued and continued to cause trouble. The prince Mu-khyud-'dzin (Nimiṃdhara) fell ill and nothing could cure him, for his soul had been carried away by the demon. The King and his ministers agreed to consult the master Padmasambhava who told them: "The most vicious of all demons has not yet been subdued. Therefore the *bla bslu* ritual must be performed".[53]

This story is probably a recent fabrication based on an indigenous source. The author wanted to set the story in ancient times, during the royal period, but by naming the unknown Tibetan prince Mu-khyud-'dzin, which is the Tibetan translation of an Indian name, he betrays his Buddhist inclinations.

Bonpo influence in structural presentation is even more conspicuous in the following passage from the same text:

"Kye! Before, any person's soul (could be ransomed)
Through the Compassion of Ārya Mañjuśrī,
The soul of prince Mu-khyud-'dzin,
By the magic power of Vajrapāṇi,
The soul of Bhikṣu Ānanda,
were repurchased from the eight categories of gods and demons of the world.[54]
Thus today, anyone's soul (can be ransomed).
I, Vajradhara, also have the power to buy back
The soul of this donor,
From the eight categories of gods and demons".[55]

---

simply included it into his collection. Moreover, the name sGeg-pa'i rdo-rje (Līlāvajra) is very obscure, *cf.* Davidson, 1981: 6, n.18).

52. Tucci, 1973: 243.

53. *sngon gyi dus na slob dpon padmas bod kyi lha 'dre thams cad dam la btags nas rgyal khams bde la bkod pa'i dus su gdug pa can gyi lha srin cig lus pa des 'gro ba yongs kyi tshe srog la rgol ba cig byung ste/ rgyal bu mu khyud 'dzin zhes bya ba nad kyis thebs nas ci byas kyang ma phan te/ de'i dus lha 'dre des bla khyer 'dug pa la/ rgyal blon thams cad bka' bgros mdzad nas slob dpon padma la zhus/ slob dpon gyi zhal nas kho lha srin thams cad kyi nang nas gdug pa che ba lus 'dug pa/ da de la bla bslu byed dgos pas.../* (f.1a, 1-3).

54. See n.87.

55. *kye/ dang po su dang su yi bla/*
*'phags pa 'jam dpal thugs rje yis/*
*rgyal bu mu khyud 'dzin pa dang/*
*lag na rdo rje'i mthu stobs kyis/*



The work on *bla bslu* by Padma gling-pa (1450-1521) which I shall compare with the Bonpo text further on, relates a story worth quoting despite its apocryphal tone:

"At the beginning of light,
In the sGang-drug, land of the Srin,
(dGongs-pa thod-dkar dreamt):
That the luminous turquoise of his soul had been stolen,
That the palace of his soul had collapsed from top to bottom,
That the lake of his soul had dried out,
That he himself was drifting towards the south (i. e. towards the land of the Srin).
(So then) dGongs-pa thod-dkar said:
"If the shining turquoise has been stolen,
The oracle, divination expert, must be consulted",
But as the oracle failed to determine (the cause), the Buddha was summoned.
He performed the divination and made the astrological calculations
And said:
"Since you have made no offerings to the gods,
They were unable to protect you.
By inviting 'Phrul-gyi rgyal-po,
You must give a ransom for your soul".[56]

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*dge slong kun dga' bo yi bla/*
*snang srid sde brgyad lag nas bslus/*
*da lta su dang su yi bla/*
*da ltar rdo rje 'dzin pa ngas/*
*snang srid sde brgyad lag las bslu/*
*sbyin bdag 'di yi bla yang bslu/* (f.3a,4-6).

56. *kye/ snang ba 'od kyi dang po la/*
*yul ni srin yul sgang drug du/*
*bla g.yu 'od gcig (can) brkus pa rmis/*
*bla mkhar rtse nas 'gyel ba rmis/*
*bla mtsho steng (gting) nas skam pa rmis/*
*rang lho phyogs der 'khyams pa rmis/*
*der dgongs pa thod dkar zhal na re/*
*bla g.yu 'od can brkus pa la/*
*mo ma mkhas pas mo brdar (bdar) 'tshal/*
*ma mthong sangs rgyas spyan drang nas/*
*mo thob de ni rtsis bkod pas/*
*mo ma de yi zhal ne/*
*khyod kyis lha rnams ma gsol bas/*
*lha yis khyod ni mgon ma nus/*
*'phrul gyi rgyal po spyan drangs nas/*
*rgyu sbyor yon bdag bla bslu'o/* (f.2a, 1-3)

Padma gling-pa, by summarising what was probably a long story and composing it in verse, deformed the original text to the extent that it has lost much of its initial meaning. It is rather odd to see a Buddhist text begin with the expression 'at the the beginning of light'. Could this be a simple modification of the name sNang-ba 'od-ldan which refers to a Bonpo deity and one of the primary creators of the universe in Bonpo cosmogony?[57] Mythical narratives in Bonpo rituals often begin with the invocation to this particular deity. The name dGongs-pa thod-kar is also problematic, since the first part, *dgongs pa*, 'thought' is, undeniably, a Buddhist term, while the second part, *thod dkar*, 'white turban', is a typical Bonpo expression. Moreover, the author portrays the Buddha as a diviner and astrologer, something which Buddhists would normally not tolerate. The title *'phrul gyi rgyal po* , 'king of sagacity', was given to Tibetan kings, first to Khri 'Dus-srong (676-704), and then to Khri Srong-lde-btsan (742-797).[58] It is also an epithet for Kong-tse (Confucius), especially in Bonpo literature. All these details suggest that this story is probably a Buddhist invention based on a Bonpo or indigenous model.

With regard to Bonpo tradition of the *bla bslu*, I have already stated that the two texts previously mentioned do not explicitly refer to any account of mythical precedent of the ritual. *SG*,[59] however, contains a mythical account that could be the prototype of the *bla bslu* ritual, for its content is very close to what occurs in present-day ritual. The story recounts the first Tibetan king's descent from heaven and his life on earth. The king falls sick because his soul has been abducted by spirits. Certain priests succeed in restoring his health by recapturing it. Here we have a mythical precedent contained in a late source but which preserved the ancient tradition. Indeed, the story is similar to that found in an early document, *PT* 1038, especially verses 18-35. Ariane Macdonald was the first to point out the archaic aspect of this passage.[60] Following is a translation of these verses:

"Lord gNya'-khri btsan-po,
is the name he bore when he descended from heaven.
King lDe-sras phyva-tsam[61]
was the name he bore when he reached the earth.

57. *Cf.* Article No.17.
58. *PT* 1287, The Chronicle (Stein, 1981: 256-57)
59. See n. 33.
60. Macdonald, 1971: 312.
61. The last syllable of this name is certainly incorrect, but the two manuscripts, the one kept in Bibliothèque Nationale (Fond tibétain, No.493) and the one from Dolpo both have the same spelling. I am unable to suggest a better reading. The Phyva are of course the ancestral deities of this king, see *PT* 1038 (Lalou, 1953; Macdonald, 1971: 215; Article No.17). As for *lde sras*, it correspond to *lha sras*. The latter is a common title for the Tibetan kings, see Stein, 1981: 244, n.31.



He descended in order to become the lord of the black-headed men,
and to please the animals bearing a mane.[62]
He reached the core of the glacier in the heart of the land.
He touched the ground at the bottom of the silver ladder with nine rungs.
He washed the dirt away in a lake,
Man and the son of gods began to communicate.
He settled in the citadel Phying-ba stag-rtse,
in Yar-lung sog-kha.
He came to be the lord of this land and he was happy there.
The priests who protected him
were Thang-yag, the priest of the Phyva,
and the priests, mTshe and gCo.
lHo-ris and brNgegs-po were his ministers.
Sha and rNgog were his subjects.
Shes and sPug served him as stewards.[63]
After the king had thus settled,[64]
the spirits from above began to harm (the king),
The spirits from below, the *chud*, spread illness.[65]
In the middle, the *dmu*, the *bdud*, and the *btsan* 'lurked about',[66]
A soothsayer,[67] sKyid-lde, was consulted.
He recognised that the *'dre* and the *gdon* spirits were indeed the cause.
The priests mTshe and gCo,
and the Thar-bon Gru-skyol performed the rituals,

62. *Cf. PT* 1038 (Lalou, 1953; Macdonald, 1971: 215; Article No.17); The Chronicle (Bacot *et al*, 1940: 128).
63. The lines 6-17 have been translated into French by Ariane Macdonald (1971: 312). The expression *brda 'jal* in line 10 has the sense of talking rather than 'faire des signes'.
64. *sku 'chags* is translated as 'd'âge d'avancé' by Ariane Macdonald (1971: 277, n.330). The word *'chag pa* means 'to settle in a place': *'chag pa =sdod pa (PS)*; *ri mgor kha ba 'chag*, 'the snow has settled on mountains' (*Dag yig gsar bsgrigs* by bSam-gtan, mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1970). *Cf.* also, A. W. Macdonald, 1982: 77.
65. The interpretation of the last three lines by Ariane Macdonald (1971:277, n.330) is interesting, but it is *ya bla*, 'the spirits from the upper sphere' (*cf.* n.28) and not 'âme paternelle' and *ma bla*, 'the spirits from the lower sphere' who captured the soul of the king. These spirits are therefore not part of the king's own soul' (*cf.* Stein, 1971: 510). The *ya bla* spirits here are described as the *bdud* in opposition to the *ma bla* who are as the *chud*. The latter are a special category of spirits, *cf. GG*, p.65. They are therefore spirits residing in three different spheres: upper, lower and middle.
66. The sense of the term *'drol* remains uncertain.
67. Acoording to Ariane Macdonald (1971:277, n.330), the term *mo ma* originally designated a woman diviner, but gives no source for this suggestion.

Having searched for offerings[68] (and) filled a little bag,[69]
they distributed (to the *bdud*, the *chud*, etc.) the gold and turquoise.
The *bdud* from above were sent back above.
The *chud* from below were sent back below.
The *btsan* from the middle were sent back to their dwelling.
The priests mTshe and gCo called back the 'Phyva of the body',[70]
by means of the soul turquoise[71] 'which glows with a white light'.
They attached it to the Lord's heart.[72]
They repurchased the soul and longevity of the Lord from the hands of the *bdud* and the *btsan*.
The power of the Lord grew and became equal to that of the sky.
He conferred on the priests, mTshe and gCo, the 'insignia' of their greatness
with turquoise ornaments.
The king gradually recovered..."[73]

We may therefore presume that this passage refers to the origin myth of the *bla bslu* ritual in Bonpo tradition.

**The description of the ritual witnessed and a comparative analysis of Bonpo and Buddhist texts.**

As seen above, there are several Buddhist texts relating to the *bla bslu* ritual. Each contains a slightly varying tradition with respect to structure and symbolism. The Bonpo text, *Tshe'i g.yung drung*, mentioned earlier, is quite close in form to the *Bla bslu tshe 'gugs*, a Buddhist text by Padma gling-pa (1450-1521).

68. The terms *thar chas* and *thar yas* are associated with the name of a priest, Thar-bon Gru-skyol and have the sense of ritual items for offering. The priest's name occurs in *ZM* (Vol.I, f.65a,2) where he is described giving orders to spirits (*lha 'dre skos la 'debs pa*).

69. The word *la ba* is a costume like the *phyu ba*, normally made of the *snam bu* cloth. *phe'u* ou *sgye'u* means small bag, see *PS*, f.39b,4. The *phe'u* here is probably made of the same cloth as of the *la ba*.

70. In my view, the expression *sku phyva* here has the same sense as that of *sku bla*, *cf.* n. 28.

71. As we have seen, the turquoise is particularly worn by chiefs (*rje*) or kings in early times. In a mythical account concerning the origin of turquoise, a king sPu-rgyal, probably gNya'-khri btsan-po, possessed a turquoise called Bya-sgong nu-sgong: *g.yu yi pha ni g.yu rje thang po/ g.yu yi ma ni g.yu sko/ spu rgyal mnyam (gnam) las gshegs kyi g.yu bya sgong nu sgong.../* (Thomas, 1957: 65; Stein, 1971: 509). A certain number of the rNying-ma-pa *gter ston* claims to have found the *bla g.yu* of early Tibetan kings, e.g. rDo-rje gling-pa and Padma gling-pa. The latter is said to have found three of them: Rin-chen 'od-'bar, sTong-ri 'od-'bar and sGang-ri khang-dmar (*TTGL*, p.211, 127).

72. *Cf.* the secion VII of the résumé of the Bonpo text.

73. For the Tibetan text, see at the end of this article.





*Plate 31: Bonpo monks perform the bla bslu ritual*

**The Bonpo Text**

The performance of the *bla bslu* ritual was requested by a Tibetan, Kyatso Sonam Wangdu, aged 30, who had just arrived in Dolanji from Tibet. He believed that his soul had left his body following a violent confrontation with the Chinese. The ritual took place the 20th September 1983 in Dolanji.

The present study is primarily concerned with the text of Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin since it served as the basis for the ritual I observed. The following is an ethnographic discription of the ritual's execution together with a summary of the ritual text:

"The preparation of the 'gifts' (*yon*) for the ransom of the soul (*bla srog bslu ba'i yon*): the ransom (*glud*) for a man consists of a male figurine (*pho glud*) made of *rtsam pa* dough and dressed in tiger skins (*stag ris, stag chas*); for a woman, a female figurine dressed in bride's clothes (*bag chas*); for a child, a beautiful child. Then, the *bla gzugs*, the 'figurine of the soul', must be fashioned: a human body with the head of the *bla rtags*, 'emblem of the clan's soul' (*bla gzugs mi yi lus la rus kyi bla rtags gang yin gyi mgo*

*bo can*).[74] The figurine's right hand must hold the 'arrow of life' (*tshe mda'*) and the left hand the 'turquoise of the soul' (*bla g.yu*). The figurine must be placed in a receptacle full of water (often called *bla mtsho*, 'lake of the soul') on which flowers and medicines float. As offerings (*mchod sbyin*), a white round *gtor ma* (*dkar gtor zlum po*) and a red triangular one (*dmar gtor zur gsum*) must be made. Finally, the white and black dice must be prepared."

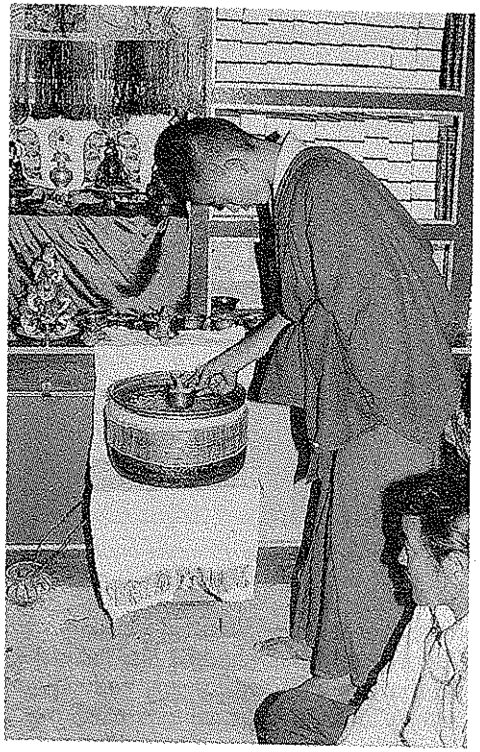


*Plate 32: The bla gzugs is being placed in the bla mtsho*

74. In his *Tshe 'gugs srog gi chad mthud* (for references see n.48), Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin explains as follows: 'if one does not know the *bla rtags* of one's own clan, then the *bla gzugs* should be made of a human body with a deer head of butter' (*bla rtags ma zin na mar gyi mi sha ba'i mgo can zhig bca' dgos*). This is exactly what one does in the practice of the ritual today.
In connexion with the *bla rtags* of the five clans (*rus*), Lopön Tenzin Namdak showed me a manuscript folio of which we do not know the origin, but which contains some interesting information on the subject: sheep is for the sGa clan, goat for sGo, deer for gDong, horse or *rkyang* for dBra and yak for 'Gru. However, in another text, the animals are designated as the *bla rtags* accoring to the sex: deer is for man, mouse for woman. Still in the same text, the animals are again designated according to social status: horse is for king, yak and sheep are for nobles, cow, ox and goats for ordinary people (*Zhu dang gshen pod*, p.378; Karmay, 1977: No.42,10).



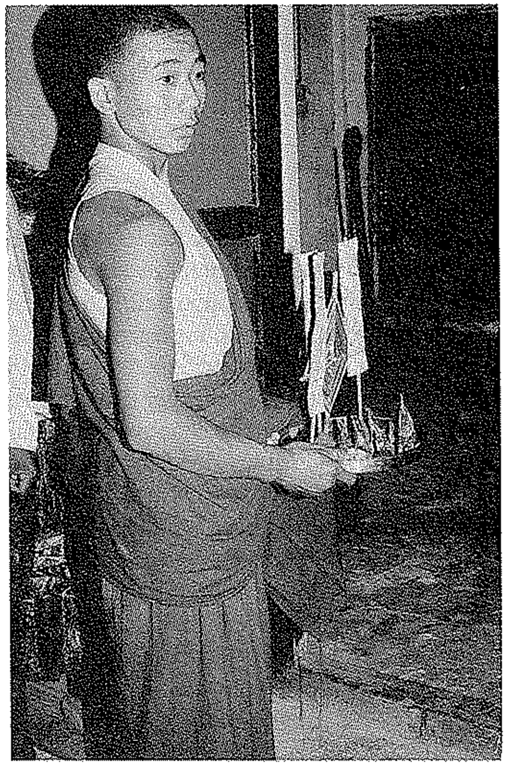


*Plate 33: The Tshe-bdud carried away by an acolyte*

In practice, I saw two distinct altars: a white board for the gods (*lha gzhi*) and a black one for the demons. A white *gtor ma* was placed on the white board as an offering to the gods and beside it, the 'figurine of the soul', a figurine of the human body with the head of a stag. The white dice was placed in front of the white *gtor ma*. The altar of Tshe-bdud, 'Demon of Life', also called 'Demon of the soul', was placed in front of the white board. It consisted of a low square box covered with a black blanket on which the following items were placed: a receptacle containing Tshe-bdud and his four servants (made of the *rtsam pa* dough); various animals printed on paper and pasted on little sticks planted all around; the 'sky' (*nam mkha'*)[75] placed in the middle, behind the Tshe-bdud,

75. In ritual texts this iterm is made of wooden sticks in the form of a cross with multicolour strings drawn over it. It is often mistakenly described as a 'trap for demons'. This meaning is not found in any Tibetan ritual texts. Two interpretations of its significance are so far attested:
1) It symbolizes the dwelling place of the spirits: *nam mkha' 'ja' ris ni/ snang srid lha 'dre yi/ gzhal yas khang pa yin/* "as for the *nam mkha'* with the motif of rainbow

represented by a contraption of sticks in the form of a cross interwoven with the threads of the rainbow colours; the red *gtor ma* for the demons and the black dice placed in front of the Tshe-bdud (Plate 33).

The 'stones of the soul' (*bla rdo*), one white and the other black (no mention of these stones is made in the text summarised above were placed in the 'lake of the soul' (*bla mtsho*) (Plate 32).

The *Tshe dbang mchog 'dus* ritual began around ten o'clock in the morning, after the preparations had been completed. Three monks sitting in a row performed the ritual. The first monk, who headed the ceremony, rang the *gshang* called *sil snyan*, the Bonpo bell;[76] the second monk beat on a drum hanging from the ceiling with his right hand and rang the little *gshang* with his left; the third monk played the cymbals (Plate 31). They were assisted by a young 'acolyte' (*mchod g.yog*).

When part of the ritual had to be chanted with music, first all the instruments were played, then the drum alone and at the end of the part all the instruments again.

The *Tshe dbang mchog 'dus* ritual lasted until two o'clock in the afternoon. It is important to recall that the aim of this ritual is longevity and that it calls upon the sage Tshe-dbang rig-'dzin mentioned above. Since this ritual is not closely connected with the *bla bslu* ritual per se, I will not analyse it here. The *bla bslu* ritual itself began at two o'clock in the afternoon and was divided into eight parts:

I. The offering of gifts for buying back the soul (*bla srog bslu ba'i yon 'bul ba*, p. 286-288).

This part, which the monks chant without musical accompaniment, explains the following meditational practice:

> "The celebrant must visualise himself as the sage Tshe-bdang rig-'dzin who, through his magic power, summons the Tshe-bdud and his entourage. The demons who have stolen the soul of the donor (*yon bdag*; in other words, he who has requested the ritual) come and are satisfied with the gifts (*gtor ma*, etc.); They return the soul and leave"

colour, it is the dwelling place of the gods and demons in this world" (*gTo chog skor*, Gangtok, 1978, f.160). It is for this reason that it was planted behind the Tshe-bdud effigy in the ritual I observed.
2) It also symbolizes the mind (*sems*), because the *sems* is intangible like the sky, hence *nam mkha' sems kyi glud du 'bul*/ "the *nam mkha'* is offered as ransom of the spirit" (*gTo 'bum dgos 'dod sna tshogs re skong*, Thimphu, 1978, f.84). *Cf.* n.14; Blondeau, Karmay, 1988: 128; Blondeau, 1990: 91-93.

76. On this musical instrument, see Helffer, 1994: 215-31.



This meditation forms the background of the ritual and lasts throughout it. The monks then chant the following declamation' (*tshig bshad*), accompanied by the drum (p. 286-288):

> "Kye! In days of yore,
> the great priest gSang-ba 'dus-pa,
> when he manifested himself as Tshe-dbang rig-'dzin,
> made you, Tshe-bdud nag-po
> and the others take an oath.
> On account of the promise you made,
> I invite you to accept the ransom.
> For you, there is the male ransom in tiger skins,
> the female ransom in bride's clothing,
> and the beautiful little ransom.
> These ransoms have eyes to see and ears to hear,
> and the other organs too.
> They are smiling and laugh, *ya la la.*
> There are also other objects for the ransom of the soul...
> They were gathered with much effort.
> I offer them to you as ransom for the donor's soul.
> May these gifts satisfy your spirits!
> Give me back the soul and life (of my donor) and leave in peace.
> If you do not return (the soul) and do not take leave,
> (remember that) I am Tshe-dbang rig-'dzin,
> one hundred thousand wrathful deities,
> emanations of my mind,
> will fill the air,
> armed with dreadful weapons[77]
> they will reduce you to dust.
> It thus behoves you to leave and return to your abode!".

At the end of this recitation, an effigy called *bla glud*, 'ransom of the soul' (not mentioned in the instructions) was taken outside by the acolyte. This particular ransom correlates with the one mentioned in Padma gling-pa's text (Part III) where it is identified as the 'benefactor's ransom' (*yon bdag gi glud*). Despite the repeated pleas asking Tshe-bdud and his suite to return the soul and leave, they remain until the end of the ritual as we shall see.

II. Invocation of the truth (*bden bdar*, p. 288-289).

> "The truthful word of the saints and the gods: gShen-rab, the *bla ma*, the *yi dam*, the *dākiṇī*, Tshe-dbang rig-'dzin and his entourage

77. The Tibetan term for this weapon is *btso*, *cf.* Snellgrove, 1967, n.5.

and Srid-pa rgyal-mo. Because of the magic power of their truthful words, the soul of the donor is recalled from the hands of those who detain it, namely Tshe-bdud and his suite. The soul is summoned into the 'figurine of the soul' which is the 'support for the imagined obective' (*dmigs rten*)".

This part of the ritual is chanted without musical accompaniment.

III. Calling the soul (*bla 'gugs*, p. 289-295).

"Invocation of the five aspects of Tshe-dbang rig-'dzin, the principal deity. To each of these five aspects corresponds a symbol, a 'gnostic' category (*ye shes, jñāna*),[78] an outer element and an inner element:

1. East, swastika, earth, flesh.
2. North, wheel, wind, breath.
3. West, lotus, fire, heat.
4. South, gem, water, blood.
5. Centre, (no symbol), sky, mind.

Appeal to these deities to send the soul back into the 'figurine of the soul' and into the 'turquoise of the soul'; to aggregate (*bsdud*) life to the 'arrow of life' and finally to dissolve the vital force (*srog*) into the word *rnri*.[79] The text adds: "if the soul is recaptured, then turn the face of the 'figurine of the soul' to the right towards me, or else turn his back to the left towards me!".

As before, the declamation is accompanied by all three instruments and then by the drum alone. At the same time, the acolyte stirs the 'lake of the soul' with the 'arrow of life' counter-clockwise (Plate 34). Towards the end of the chanting, he removes the arrow and places the 'figurine of the soul' in the whirling water. They wait for the figurine to stop moving. If it stops on the wrong side, the text says that the incantation and the stirring of the water may be repeated up to nine times. In the ritual I observed, the figurine stopped the first time facing the monks. Everyone was relieved.

78. For the Sanskrit terms see Sakaki, 1916-1926: 8.
79. In his *Tshe 'gugs srog gi chad mthud* (for references, see n.48), Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin states that on the *bla g.yu* one writes the term *rnri* in white for man and red one for woman, but this is not mentioned in the text under study and so was not executed in the ritual I observed. The term *rnri*, which represents the soul, is derived from the Sanskrit term *nri*, 'man', *cf. dMod pa drag sngags mthu'i spyi sdom srid pa'i gter khyim chen mo*, f.46 (for references see n.23); Stein, 1957: 202; Kvaerne, 1985: 14.



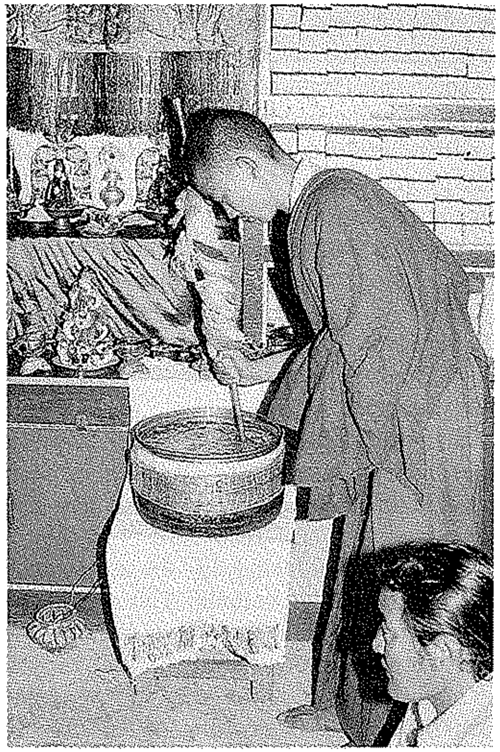


*Plate 34: The bla mtsho is stirred with a ritual arrow*
*Plates 31-34: Dolanji, HP, India (SGK 1983)*

IV. The 'Soul stone' (*bla rdo*, p. 295-296)

"Invocation to the same deities requesting them to show the white stone if the soul of the benefactor has been recaptured, if not, the black stone".

This part is chanted without musical accompaniment. At the same time, the donor (or the acolyte if he or she is not present) reaches for the stone in the water with his right hand. If he removes the white stone, then all is well. If not the process may be repeated another three times.

V. Dice (*cho lo*, p. 296-297)

"Invocation to the deities, the four judges (*drang mkhan*), the eight witnesses (*dpang*) and the five magistrates (*zhal lce* [*che*]) to attend the game of dice between the donor and Tshe-bdud".

This part is recited without musical accompaniment. The acolyte offers the white *gtor ma* to the gods. At the end of the recitation, the

donor takes the white dice and throws it on the white board in front of the altar. Someone else takes the black dice and throws it on the black board in front of the Tshe-bdud. The monks then recite a prayer which Kong-tse is supposed to have pronounced when he confronted gods and demons playing a dice game.[80] If the donor is absent, the acolyte takes his place. At the end of the prayer, the two persons throw the dice at the same time. If the white dice shows the highest number, then all is well. If not, the process may be repeated another three times. If the black dice still wins, the text says a ritual addressed to gShin-rje (Yama) must be performed.[81]

VI. To show the way (*lam bstan*)

> "Oh! You, Lords of death...
> return to your place.
> Take your own bodies (which you do not wish to harm), as an example,
> and do not harm others!..."

This declamation is not included in the text summarised here, but is found on page 273 of the volume. The monks recite it to the accompaniment of the drum, while the acolyte carries the 'offering effigy' (*mdos*) out of the house and throws it away.

VII. The 'empowerment of life' (*tshe dbang*, p. 298-299)

The main officiant ties the 'soul turquoise' and the 'knot of life' (*tshe mdud*) around the donor's neck. During the preparations, the string with the turquoise is placed in the left hand of the 'figurine of the soul' (*bla gzugs*):[82]

> "The main officiant visualises himself as Tshe-dbang rig-'dzin, with an infinite number of rays radiating from his heart to the four corners of the universe, thereby gathering the blessings of the Buddha, the magical power of the protective deities, the strength and magic of the eight categories of gods and demons, the quintessence of life and the radiance (*tshe bkrag dang bcud mdangs*) of all beings. The whole collection is transformed into the white syllable A which enters the donor's sinciput and descends into his heart where it unites with consciousness (*rnam shes*) in the form of the syllable *rnri*. The donor thus receives the boon of long life, the state of immortality (*'chi med tshe'i dngos grub*)".

80. On this myth, see Article No. 10.
81. The text of this ritual has until now not been available for consultation.
82. The officiant makes sure of the longevity of his benefactor by means of the process of rejuvenation analogous to that of the conception of the soul, *cf.* above.



Then the head officiant, holding the 'arrow of life' in his right hand and ringing the bell *gshang* in his left hand, recites the following passage:

> "May the life of this donor, which is exhausted, weakened or lost, be recalled by Tshe'i rgyal-po (*alias* Tshe-dbang rig-'dzin)..."

VIII. Enunciation of auspicious words (*bkra shis gsol pa*, p. 217-218).

This passage is found on page 217 and is not an integral part of the *bla bslu* text. It is a prayer addressed to the gods for the benefit of the donor and all sentient beings.

**The Buddhist Text**

Padma gling-pa's *Bla bslu tshe 'gugs* is a text specifically devoted to what we refer to as the *bla bslu* ritual. It is more archaic in form compared to the elaborate work of Kong-sprul, but the adaptation of an indigenous ritual does not always convey an impression of authenticity, especially with respect to Buddhism. I have already commented on the contents of this work. The following is a summary of Padma gling-pa's text. As usual, the text begins with instructions concerning the preparations:

> "On a square box (*mkhar thab*) stands a black human figurine, the 'demon of the soul' (*bla bdud*) with a lasso to capture the soul (*bla 'dzin zhags pa*). Above, on his right, flies a black bird (*bla bya*); below, behind, to his left, a black dog (*bla khyi*) follows him. Four black figurines stand at the cardinal points, each accompanied by a bird and a dog. This ensemble forms the *mdos*, the ransom for the donor (*yon bdag gi glud*) together with the effigies of a stag, sheep, a wild yak (*'brong*) and a horse. *gTor ma*, male and female figurines (*pho thong, mo thong*),[83] a receptacle containing barley and a white fugurine (*ngar mi dkar po*), the white dice (*bla shvo*), the 'soul turquoise', the 'soul pebble' (*bla rdel*), a sheep's leg (*bla rkang*),[84] and the arrow are all placed on a white board. A black figurine (*ngar mi nag po*), the black dice and the black *gtor ma* are disposed on a black board. The 'figurine of the soul' is placed in the 'lake of the soul' and the tutelary divinity of the donor is invoked."

I. (Invitation to the gods) (f. 1a, 5-2a, 1).

83. *Cf.* Snellgrove, 1967, pp.36, ll.10; 90, ll.35.
84. In Buddhist texts, this often represents the soul, *cf.* the text of Yar-lung Chos-ldan-pa, see n.50, No.iii, f.551-52. *Cf.* also n.26.

"The *bla ma*, the *yi dam*, the *chos skyong*, the nine local deities of the world[85] and their blessing are requested."

II. (Precedent) (f. 2a, 1-2).
The origin myth is narrated.[86]

III. (Offerings) (f. 2a, 4-3a, 4).
"The 'ransom for the soul' (*bla glud*) is given to the 'demon of the soul'. In the instructions above, the latter and his suite are black, but here they are of different colours depending on the direction they represent. East is white, South is yellow, West is red, North is black. They are requested to accept the ransom and to return the donor's soul."

IV. Incantation of calling the soul (*bla 'gugs gyer ba,* f. 3a, 4-6a, 1).
"One holds the arrow and invokes Hayagrīva, Vajrapāṇi, Amitayus, and all the various *ḍākiṇī*. They are requested to recapture the soul (*bla tshe gnyan po tshur la blang*) from the hands of the *yakṣa, deva, nāga, bdud, btsan, the'u rang, ma mo,* Yama[87] and others. At the same time the 'lake of the soul' containing the 'figurine of the soul' is stirred."

V. (Game of dice) (f. 6a, 1-6b, 2).
"First, one invokes the *pho lha*, the deity born at the same time as oneself (*lhan cig skyes pa*), who is dressed in white and holds an arrow. A handsome man (*skyes pa mtshan bzang*) throws the dice. One then addresses the following prayer to the *bla bdud* (described here as the demon begotten at the same time as oneself): "If the soul is not recaptured, then make the black dice show a higher number". The black dice is then thrown by an ugly woman (*bud med mtshan ngan*)."

VI. Showing the way to the demon of the soul (*bla bdud lam bstan pa,* f. 6b, 2-7a, 1).
"The 'effigy offering' (*mdos*) is taken outside and thrown at the bottom of a valley, at the crossing of three roads."

VII-VIII. The incantation of 'calling of the soul' (*bla 'gugs gyer ba,* f. 7a, 1-7b, 2).

85. On these deities, see Article No.24, pp. 437, 448-49.
86. *Cf.* the section on the mythical precedents.
87. These are normally called *lha srin sde brgyad*, 'eight categories of gods and demons', but the list varies in sources, see Article No. 24, p. 450.



"The 'figurine of the soul' is stirred in the 'lake of the soul' to ensure that the soul is recaptured. Then, the 'figurine of the soul' and the 'soul turquoise', the white pebble, the sheep's leg, and the white dice are placed in a bag called the 'bag of the soul' (*bla khug*) which is then given to the donor. Finally, the 'sealing of the soul' (*bla tshe rgyas gdab*) is announced. In this the donor is entrusted to Amitayus for the protection of his soul."

## Conclusion

From a very early period, the concept of soul was designated by the term *bla.* Early documents also mention the idea that the *bla* could be abducted by a spirit and could therefore be recaptured by means of a ransom. The soul was symbolized by a turquoise attached to the upper part of the body, especially among persons of high social rank. Damage to the turquoise was seen as an evil omen.

Evidence provided by these ancient documents suggest that the origin of the *bla bslu* ritual derives from early indigenous beliefs. This goes against the theory upheld by certain Tibetan and Western scholars who stipulate that the origin of the rite is Indian.

The *bla bslu* ritual as we know it today in fact derived from these early non-Buddhist beliefs, and further confirms my hypothesis that there was no real break between the ritual beliefs of the ancient tradition and those preserved by the later Bonpo ritual tradition.

In my study of this ritual, I have focused primarily on a Bonpo text since this text served as the basis for the ritual performance I witnessed. Furthermore, when we are concerned with a society which has had a written tradition for over a thousand years, the study of the text on which ritual acts are founded is essential for understanding all aspects of the ritual.

## TIBETAN TEXT

gnam gyi gong (B: dgung) nas byon pa'i ming/
rje (D: rje lde) gnay' khri btsan po yin/
gnam nas sa la byon pa'i mtshan/
rgyal po lde sras phyva tsam lags (B, D: bya tsam la)/
mgo nag (B: gho; D: 'go) mi'i spyi rje dang/
dud 'gro rngog chags (B: chag) rkyen du (B, D: rgyan du) gshegs /
yul gling (D: gling gi) snying po gangs kyi (B: kyis) ra bar byon/
dngul (D: rngul) skas them dgu la babs ((B: bab) ste/
khrus kyi (B: kyis) rdzing bu la bag chags dri ma bkrus/

mi dang lha sras brda' (D: bda') yang 'jal (B, D: mjal)/
yul yar lung (B: yul) sog ka ru/
mkhar phying (B, D: phyi) ba stag rtser bzhugs/
yul gyi (D: yul du) rjer gshegs (B, D: gshen) de rang skyid/
de'i (B: de'i dus su) sku srung gshen po ni/
phyva (B, D: phya) bon thang yag dang/
pha pha mtshe gco(B: tshe gcos) gnyis kyis mdzad/
blon po lho (D: lto) ris brngegs (B: bsgren, D: bgren) po yin/
'bangs (B: 'bang) ni yar dang (B, D: gyi) rngog gis byas (B: gyis bya)/
phyag tsahng shes dang spug (B: yug) gis mdzad/
rgyal po de'i sku 'chag (B: 'chags) slad rol du/
ya (B: yab) bla bdud kyang mi la bkyon (B: bkyen)/
ma bla chud kyis (B: dang) yam yang (D: kyang) babs/
bar du dmu bdud btsan gsum 'drol/
mo ma skyid lde (D: ldem) la mo btab nas/
'dre dang gdon gyi (B: gyis) ngo yang (B: ngos kyang) bzung/
pha ba mtshe gco (B: tshe gcos) dang/
thar bob gru (B: grub) skyol gnyis/
la ba phe'u gang thar yas btsal/
gser g.yu rin chen thar cha bkyes/
ya (B: yab) bla bdud kyang gyen du bskyal (B: bskyil)/
ma bal chud kyang thur du mnan/
bar sa btsan yang (B: gyis) thad (B: thar) du bskyal/
gshen po pha ba mtshe gco (B: tshe gcos) des (B: de)/
bla (D: brla) g.yu 'od dkar gyis rje'i sku phyva (B: phyag) bkug/
rje'i thugs kar bla (D: brla) g.yu btags (B:dgong)/
bdud btsan lag nas bla (D: brla) tshe bkug/
rje'i mnga' thang dgung (B: dgong) dang mnyam ste dgyes/
bon la che ba'i yig tshang (D: tshangs) gnang/
gshen po pha ba mtshe gco (B: tshe gcos) la/
rin chen gser gyi (B: gyis) bya ru la/
g.yu'i ldem 'phru can de gnang/
rgyal po'i sku yang rim par btsas (B: btsal)/...

B = Manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Fond tibétain No. 493, f.37a,7-38a,6.
D = Manuscript from Dolpo, *SG*, p.78.



# The Man and the Ox: a Ritual for Offering the *glud*

The ritual for offering the *glud* belongs to the so-called 'black water' (*chab nag*) category of which practices can be considered non-Buddhist and most likely indigenous.[1] The *glud* ritual itself forms the basis of other rituals, such as the *mdos*[2] which is why the meaning of the two terms tend to be confused. The *mdos,* however, is distinguished by its particular votive construction[3] representing a palace or more often the universe, whereas the *glud* may take various forms as we shall see. The etymology, hence the origin, of the term *mdos* and even its present meaning in the rituals that interest us here still remain obscure. On the other hand, the notion of *glud* and its attendant rituals are attested in early documents as well as in later literature. This notion, however, has never been the object of an overall study, despite its prevalence in Tibetan rituals and its fundamental importance for a great number of ancient rituals.

I will first discuss the notion of *glud* and the texts relating to it before examining the ritual itself, its general significance and the famous State Ceremony, the Glud-'gong rgyal-po, which was described by Western travellers at the beginning of the century as the banishment of a 'scapegoat'. Lastly, I will document the notion of *glud* in early beliefs with a number of mythical accounts related to it.

## The notion of *glud*

The cause of such misfortunes as epidemics or natural catastrophes is often ascribed to a deity or to malignant spirits who have been offended in some way or other. It is often believed that the soul of a sick person has been abducted by such entities. To remove the evil, it is believed the afflicted person may be replaced by a substitute by means of a ritual whose effectiveness lies in its mythical precedents. The priest justifies his ritual action and ensures its efficacy by identifying himself as the bearer of a tradition traceable to a master said to be the mythical founder of the ritual.[4] Any attempt to understand the rituals without prior knowledge of their myths would therefore be useless. But the hope of finding any

1. *ZJ* (Snellgrove, 1969: 77).
2. *Cf.* Blondeau, Karmay, 1988: 128.
3. *Cf.* Blondeau, 1990: 93-94.
4. *Cf.* Snellgrove, 1969: 20; Karmay, 1986: 79-80.

coherent and systematic accounts of these myths in the ritual texts is equally vain.[5]

The *glud* is conceived as a ransom destined to 'buy back' what has been taken away or to avert the influence of inimical invisible entities. According to the most important document concerning this ritual (eighth-ninth centuries), it consists in 'buying back (or cheating) by means of ransom' (*glud kyis slu ba*).[6] *ZJ*, a work of the fourteenth century, provides a similar example:

> "So the Bonpo of the original 'Black Waters', in order to benefit living beings, exchange two equal things and so (give) a good ransom, performing the Rite of Equivalence, the exchange of two equal things".[7]

The *glud* is considered as something that can be exchanged for another of equal value (*mnyam gnyis brje ba*). The ritual is therefore based on the notion of 'exchange' between the priest and the evil spirits, and on that of 'equivalence' between what the spirits have taken and the ransom given to them for the afflicted person or for the general welfare of the community. In some sources, the ransom is presented as having greater value and power than the person for whom the ritual is performed,[8] whereas another source explains that the figurine is called *glud* precisely because it resembles the beneficiary of the ritual (*'dra glud*)[9] and thereby enables one to 'buy back' or to 'cheat'. The *glud* is thus initially seen as an effigy. This explanation is relevant as it seems to be based on the etymological link between the terms *glud* and *bslu* (*bslu ba*, buy back, cheat).

The Tibetan concept of *glud* thus differs radically from the Biblical notion of the 'transfer of evil onto another' as it is expected in the 'scapegoat' rite of the annual expiation festival (Yom Hakipurim). The main purpose of this type of ritual is to lay the burden of one's misery onto another.[10] As we shall see below, such a practice may have existed in Tibet, but the yearly State Ceremony of Glud-'gong rgyal-po, in Lhasa and other places, bears no relation to the notion of a 'scapegoat', contrary to what many authors have suggested,[11] since the two rituals are based on two entirely different conceptions.

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5. *Cf.* Blondeau, 1990: 100.
6. Thomas, 1957: 76, l.352 (Part II), *cf.* also *Bon sha ba ru rgyas* in the volume of *gTo phran* (Karmay, 1977: No.71), pp.483-482, 486.
7. Snellgrove, 1969: 77.
8. For example, *GP*, p.545.
9. *TL*, p.480.
10. Frazer, 1971: 755.
11. David-Néel, 1924: 553-56; Macdonald, 1930: 199-200; Asboe, 1936: 74-75; Waddell, 1971: 512-13; Tucci, Heissig, 1973: 282. Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1975: 507-



The terms *ngar glud* and *ngar mi* also have much the same meaning as that of the *glud*. According to G. Tucci the term *glud* generally refers to 'magical ransom' while *ngar glud* means 'salutary image'.[12] D. L. Snellgrove accurately translated the term *ngar mi* as 'figurine'.[13] However, the *ngar mi* is no ordinary figurine. The manufacture of the *ngar mi* requires all kinds of substances, especially precious ones that are added to the paste in order to charge it with 'power' (*ngar*).[14] The *glud* and the *ngar glud* do not necessarily resemble each other. Whereas the former may take different forms, the latter is invariably represented by an effigy. Indeed, the *glud* may consist of plants, branches or stones and in some instances animals or even living persons, as we shall see in the myths below. It can also take the form of a *mdos*. In a Dunhuang manuscript on the *glud* ritual, the plant *Ephedra sp*,[15] barley, along with other items constitute the ransom for the body (*sku glud*).[16] In another manuscript, a white lamb is offered in exchange for the spirit (*thugs glud*). M. Lalou translated this expression as 'the ransom of the soul',[17] which evokes the ransom of the soul rituals (*bla bslu*) wherein the soul is sometimes represented by a lamb's leg.[18] In another document, the effigy of a monkey is offered as a ransom to the demon who wants to prevent the establishment of the human race on earth.[19]

However, the function of the *ngar glud* in relation to the *glud* is not clearly defined in the texts. In point of fact, the *ngar glud* is the effigy of the person for whom the ritual is performed.[20] Its role is to guide (*sna 'dren pa*) the *glud* which may be represented by a *mdos*. The qualities of power, speed and eloquence are attributed to it. In other words, the *ngar glud* is supposed to lead the *mdos* out of the house to the dwelling of the evil spirits to whom the ransom is destined. In practice, however, it is a

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11. The word scapegoat is still used in inverted commas by Snellgrove and Richardson, 1968 (see the caption opposite p.120).
12. Tucci, Heissig, 1973: 230, 234.
13. Snellgrove, 1969, p.36, l.8; p.86, l.25.
14. In this context the mixture of the grain flour and other substances is called *ngar gyi phye*, see *glud rabs*, *ND*, p.588) and the paste of the mixture *ngar zan*, see Tibetan Text II). In the *glud rabs* which we have just noted, the term *ngar* is used by itself to designate the *ngar glud* in expressions such as *ngar gyi pha smros pa ...ngar gyi ma smros pa/* (p.592). Elsewhere it has the usual sense of 'strength', 'power' in the expression: *ngar gyi glud*, 'the *glud* charged with strength' (*ChS*, p.212).
15. *mtshe* (Meyer, 1981: 178); for a botanical description and illustration, see *DzM*, p.155.
16. Thomas, 1957: p. 71, ll.224; p.74, ll.289-297.
17. Lalou, 1953: 18.
18. See Article No.19, n.84.
19. *Cf.* Article No.17, p. 266.
20. *mdos glud sna khrid stobs po che* (*GS*, p.495); *sna 'dren smra mkhas 'gro la 'gyogs* (*GS*, p.496); *rang rang gi gzugs kyi skye mched dod pa* (*GS*, p.497).

person who takes both the *mdos* and the effigy out of the house and places them at some distance from the village, usually at a crossroad.

**The texts of the *glud* ritual**

Our earliest source is a Dunhuang manuscript already studied by F. W. Thomas who regarded the *glud* as a 'scapegoat' ritual.[21] Although the end part of the manuscript is missing, this text, which bears no title or colophon, remains our primary source for the study of the *glud* ritual at the time of the Yarlung kings. Indeed, it contains not only the origin myths but also the liturgical part of the ritual which is exceptional in the Dunhuang manuscripts. Like other documents of the same origin, it does not lend itself easily to analysis and Thomas's study needs to be revised. Needless to say, this manuscript deserves closer scrutiny, but this lies beyond the scope of the present article which deals with the *glud* ritual in general. Another early manuscript, of which M. Lalou[22] published a summary without making any mention of its connection with the *glud* ritual, contains mythical accounts similar to those found in the text studied by Thomas. It is worth noting that the nine divinities (*lha dgu*) of the *glud* ritual in the text studied by Thomas are all mountain deities.[23] They obviously refer to the *lha dgu* who are called to witness in an edict (*bka' gtsigs*) issued by King Khri Srong-lde-btsan (742-797).[24] In another of his edicts, it is stated that "the 'system of propitiation' (*cho ga*) of the *sku lha* (the mountain deities), in the 'ancient religion of Tibet' (*bod kyi chos mying* [*rnying*] *pa*) differs from that in Buddhism".[25] A number of priests, who practised the *glud* rituals mentioned in Thomas's manuscript, are identical to those encountered in another Dunhuang manuscript (*PT* 1285) and also appear in historical works belonging to the later Bonpo tradition, as we shall see below.

In the manuscript studied by Thomas, plants and other substances are used in the propitiation of mountain deities and not animal sacrifices, as might have been expected. This contradicts the theory that Buddhism gradually replaced bloody sacrifices of the early Tibetan rituals with dough effigies.[26] It has often been claimed that the barbarian Tibetans or the Bonpo practised bloody sacrifices since such practices are mentioned in the Sino-Tibetan peace treaty (821-822). R. A. Stein's recent research,

21. Thomas, 1957: chapter IV.
22. *PT* 1285 (Lalou, 1959).
23. Only eight names of mountains are given: 1) rTsang-lha Pu-dar; 2) gNub-lha mThon-drug; 3) Thang-lha Ya-bzhur; 4) Klum-lha Thugs-po; 5) sKyi-lha Bya-mang; 6) Yar-lha Sham-po; 7) dBye-lha sPyi-gang-po; 8) rNgegs-lha Bya-mang (Thomas, 1957: 74-76).
24. *KhG*, f.89a,6.
25. *KhG*, f.110b,2.
26. *Cf.* Blondeau, Karmay, 1988: 135-36.



however, has revealed that this practice was in fact a Chinese custom imitated by the Tibetans in order to show respect to the protocol of equality and reciprocity between the two States.[27] This does not necessarily imply that such practices did not exist during the early royal period; indeed, the ordinance of King lHa Bla-ma Ye-shes-'od refers to animal sacrifices practised by the Buddhists themselves in Tibet.[28]

In later texts, the mythical narratives of the *glud* ritual are referred to as *glud rabs*. Generally they are simply origin myths concerning the substances from which the *ngar glud* or effigy is manufactured. The *glud rabs*, however, represent a rare literary genre and only in a collection of Bonpo works devoted to the *brGya bzhi*[29] do we find two successive *glud rabs* preserved as liturgical texts. The first contains fairly common mythical elements of Indic origin, such as Garuḍa, Trāyāstriṃśa, Indra and Asura. It seems that this text was composed relatively late, when Buddhism, with its Indian mythology, was already firmly established in Tibet. On the other hand, the second text is of considerable interest to us since it contains elements that can be traced back to very early times and that can therefore be considered indigenous. Indeed, not only is the text written in the same style as the songs found in the Dunhuang documents, but it also includes expressions as well as entire passages in the same archaic form as in a Dunhuang manuscript (*PT* 1285). While the literary style evokes that of the early songs, the myth itself is identical to that in Thomas's document.

In the Dunhuang manuscript (*PT* 1285), the protagonist of each myth is the lord of a region either in Tibet or another country. There are twelve regions and each lord is attended by a priest (*bon*). For instance, the lord of Bal is assisted by a priest named Bal-bon Rom-po,[30] a name which reappears in later Bonpo tradition.[31] In the manuscript published by Thomas, China is added to the list of countries. This addition probably dates from the time when relations between China and Tibet were established.[32] In any event, it is this myth, set in China, that is taken up in the *glud rabs* and which I have translated here:

(312) Kye! Long ago, when (the world) was formed,
A name was given to the land of
sTang-bzang in China.
In the castle (of) sTag-pa,
The name of the father was

27. Stein, 1988: 125-31.
28. *Cf.* Article No.1, p. 11.
29. On the Buddhist version of the *brGya-bzhi* ritual, *cf.* Blondeau, 1990: 97-98.
30. Lalou, 1959, p.15, ll.53-54.
31. *LShDz* (Karmay, 1972: 111, n.66)
32. Thomas, 1957: 76.

Lord Mi-btsan rmang-ba.
The name of the mother,
Nyi-khri.
They have children.
The brother,
Prince Sra-brtan and,
The sister,
Princess dKar-mo.
The parents,
The prince and the princess,
Were attacked by the evil spirits from above,
And by the spirits *chud*[33] from below.
The nine *g.yen*[34] caused the illness *dal rim* to fall upon them,
The four *btsan* were on the prowl,
All the gods and the demons were aroused.
The lord and his wife
Fell ill.
(So much so that at night they would cry) "*a na na* will the day ever come?"
(And during the day they would cry from cold) "*a chu chu* will the night ever come?"
So the Chinese Bonpo Legs-stang rmang-po[35] was summoned
He performed the rite and the diagnosis.
He identified the malady.
He discovered which type of spirit (was to blame)
He said: "There are many ways of executing the ransom of the body,
But in this case, a *ngar glud* made of dough must be offered".
So ten servants set off
And looked round in 'Bri-thang.
They (asked) seven wealthy families
To give them seven different kinds of grain:
Millet and rice,
Wheat and peas,
Barley and unhusked barley[36]
And buckwheat,[37] seven in all.

33. On the category of this spirit, *cf.* Article No. 19, p. 325.
34. A classification of beings in the Bonpo cosmogony, *NSG*, f. 20b,3: *dmu, bdud, btsan, klu, gnyan, sa bdag, bgegs, srin* and *'byung po*. On folio 22b, 2 a different list is given, but there are only 8: *lha, klu, mi, dmu, tshams, bgegs, srin* and *gnod sbyin*.
35. One of the six great learned men in the Bonpo tradition (*ZM*, Vol.II, f.291b; *LShDz*, Karmay, 1972: 17, 24, 42, 75, 80, 109, 174, 180).
36. *Cf.* Jest, 1975: 130.
37. *Cf.* Jest, 1975: 131.



These grains were crushed and ground.
The gold from Ya-rab, the land of gold,
Was melted.
The silver from Khyung-lung dngul-mkhar[38]
Was provided.
The turquoise expert from lCog-yul
Filed the turquoise.
The coppersmith from Sum-yul[39]
Melted the copper.
The blacksmith from Zom-shing
Filed the iron.
The rhinoceros hunter
Filed the horn.
The conch shell from the land of Sa-le[40]
Was filed.
A *ngar glud* was made from the paste of this mixture.
How beautiful the face of the male figurine!
How swift the effigy of the horse!
If the head of the *ngar glud* is bald,
The feathers of a sBab-ser[41] may serve as hair.
If he has no eyes,
Multi-coloured onyx will enable him to see.
Thus cowry replaces the teeth,
And red saffron the tongue.
If he has no heat,
The fire of pine wood may serve instead
The fragrant *slas me*[42] replaces the heart
The *se mo lo dros*[43] serves as flesh,
Vermilion is used as blood.
The plant *rma bya'i gdong*[44] is used for the face.
Before the thirteen spirits from above,
Before the thirteen spirits from below,[45]
*Ngar mi* you speak so eloquently, *si li li*.
You walk so gracefully, *ye re re*.

38. The ancient capital of Zhang-zhung, *cf.* Bacot *et al*, 1940: 116: *khyung lung ni rdul (rngul) mkhar/*
39. On the identification of this land, see Yamaguchi, 1975.
40. The word *sa le* often occurs as an epithet of conch shell.
41. An unidentified bird.
42. A unidentified plant. Further on, another plant is given for the substitution of heart.
43. An unidentified plant. Elsewhere, it is the flesh of rhinoceros which is used as substitute.
44. Or peacock feather, *cf.* note 65.
45. No text, to my knowledge, identifies this group of spirits.

You sing, *skyu ru ru*.
You are sent to all the gods and demons of the world.
May you, the eight types of gods and demons,[46] be satisfied with this ransom!
Release the lord and his wife and their children!
I benefit the sick, you make them moan.
As the sick were healed formerly (through this rite)
Today, I, the priest and they, my donors,
To all the eight types of gods and demons,
Offer a hundred *ngar glud*.
Now that you are satisfied
And that you have removed the evil,
I request you to turn your mouths away from us!"[47]

Another text preserved by Bonpo tradition, the *Srid pa spyi mdos*, is equally relevant here. This document also seems to be very ancient, not only in its structure, but also in its style which again evokes the songs in the Dunhuang manuscripts mentioned above. According to the colophon, the ritual described in this text dates back to the time of the great gShen gCe'od and was committed to writing (*yi ger btab*) by Sangs-po khrin-khod. The identity of these personages and therefore their dates remain unknown.[48] This does not interfere, however, with the exceptional nature of this text, insofar as its structure and pantheon are concerned. The following is a passage pertaining to the *glud* strictly speaking:

"bSvo! bSvo! bSvo!
What does the Lord of *btsan* do?
He eats meat,
He drinks blood,
He takes away the 'vital force' (from beings).
He threatens the *gsas* gods.
But gShen-rab is endowed with supernatural power.
He strikes the head (of the *btsan)* with his red *dzvo*.[49]
He entrusts the life (of the *btsan*) to the priests.
The votive offering objects are created (as follows):
As a ransom for life, there is the *nam mkha'*,[50]
For heat, there is a lamp,
For blood, there is water,

46. For this group of spirits, see Article No. 24, p. 450.
47. For the Tibetan text, see Text I.
48. *Cf.* d'ell Angelo (1986: 107-110) who believes it is possible to identify and give dates of these personages.
49. An 'explosive arm'. *Cf.* Snellgrove, 1967: 256, n.5; Karmay, 1972: 98.
50. On this ritual object and its symbolic meaning, see Article No.19, n.75.



For flesh, there is earth.
Since pleasant objects have been placed here (for you),
Recognise the damaging effect of your malevolence...."[51]

The substitution of life, breath, heat, blood and flesh with the five elements is an essential aspect of the *glud* ritual. As in the *glud rabs*, which we have cited above, various substances are used to represent most parts of the body on account of their resemblance in shape or colour, or of their therapeutic properties. Sarat Ch. Das noted the use of such ingredients in the preparation of an effigy for the *glud* ritual, but in our opinion the meaning of the ritual escaped him:
"...one's effigy made of barley or wheat straw, and its interior filled with grain, edibles, cloth, medicine, and precious articles such as gold, silver or coins and then thrown in the direction from which the evil spirit is supposed to have come".[52]
Following is a list of the body parts and the corresponding substances used as substitutes in the ritual:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| mind | *sems* | *nam mkha'*[53] |
| heart | *snying* | fruit of *Spondias axillaris*[54] |
| lung | *glo ba* | *gla gor zho sha*[55] |
| liver | *mchin pa* | fruit of *Entada scandens*[56] |
| spleen | *tsher pa*[57] | *mkhal srin byi'u*[58] |
| kidneys | *mkhal ma* | fruit of *Macuna prurita*[59] |
| bile | *mkhris pa* | *Swertia chirayta*[60] |
| tendon | *rgyus pa* | 'tendon of a vulture'[61] |
| bone | *rus* | conch shell |
| flesh | *sha* | flesh of a rhinoceros |
| blood | *khrag* | vermilion |
| skin | *lpags* | skin of a badger |

51. For the Tibetan text see Text II.
52. Tibetan-English Dictionary, Calcutta, 1902.
53. *Cf.* note 50.
54. *snying zho sha* (Meyer, 1981: 175). For its description and illustation, see *DzM*, p.85.
55. Also written as *zla go zho sha* (*DSh*, p.197). Unidentified. For its description and illustration, see *DzM*, p.85.
56. *mchin pa zho sha* (*DSh*, p.198; Meyer, 1981: 175). It is also called *ba mchin smug po*. For its description and illustration, see *DzM*, p.85.
57. Also written as *'cher ba*.
58. Unidentified.
59. *mkhal ma zho sha* (Meyer, 1981: 173). The term *ba mkhal smug po* is probably referes to the same substance.
60. *tig ta* (Meyer, 1981: 175).
61. *thang dkar spu rgyus*. However, *thang dkar* can be an abridged form of *thang phrom dkar po, Datura stramonium* (Meyer, 1981: 175).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| body hair | *spu* | root of *Coelogyne cristata*[62] |
| heat | *drod* | fire |
| breath | *dbugs* | wind |
| liquid | *chu'i khams* | water |
| head | *mgo* | squash[63] |
| hair | *skra* | feather of *Pucrasia macrolopha*[64] |
| brain | *klad* | pearl |
| face | *zhal* | plant *Adiantum venustum*[65] or ocellus of the peacock feather |
| nose | *sna* | copper coin |
| eye | *mig* | fruit of *Sapindus mukorossi*[66] or onyx |
| ear | *rna* | birch bark |
| teeth | *so* | cowry |
| tongue | *lce* | saffron[67] |
| hands | *lag* | root of *Orchis incarnata*[68] |
| feet | *rkang* | iron |
| clothes | *gos* | silk[69] |

In ritual texts, these substances are often praised and presented as having more value than their corresponding body parts.[70] In some cases, the abductors are very demanding. In the myth relating the restitution of King Dri-gum btsan-po's body, the water spirit (*klu*) who had stolen the body demands in exchange a girl with eyes that close like those of a bird.[71] In the mythical narrative of a purification ritual,[72] the required ransom is a boy with a round head, a set of teeth in one piece, curly hair and webbed fingers.

**The Glud-'gong rgyal-po**

Among the *glud* rituals, the most important and most spectacular is the State Ceremony of the expulsion of the Glud-'gong rgyal-po in Lhasa. At the turn of this century, several Western travelers witnessed what they described as the 'scapegoat' ritual, but most of them confused

62. *pu shel rtsi* (Meyer, 1981: 176); for its description and illustration, see *DzM*, p.166.
63. *ku ba* or *ka bed* (*DSh*, p.220), for its description and illustration, see *DzM*, p.182.
64. *zer mo* (Meyer, 1981: 179); for its description and illustration, see *DzM*, p.229.
65. *rma bya'i gdong* (Meyer, 1981: 178) or *rma bya'i mdongs*.
66. *lung thang* (Meyer, 1981: 179), for its description and illustration, see *DzM*, p.104.
67. *leb rgan*.
68. *dbang po lag pa* ou *dbang lag* (Meyer, 1981: 177).
69. The texts that give these substitutes: *GZh*, p.106; *ChD*, pp.278-79.
70. For example, *GZh*, p.107; *ChD*, p.280-81.
71. See myth No.2.
72. See myth No.3.



this ceremony with another that also takes place at New Year. Ariane Macdonald, in her study on the Tshogs-mchod, a ceremony commemorating the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama, was the first to determine the precise date of the expulsion ritual and to make a critical analysis of the secondary sources:

> "Mrs David-Neel may be considered a qualified observer since she witnessed parts of the ceremony of the expulsion of the Glud-'gong rgyal-po in Lhasa and spoke Tibetan. But, although her description is interesting, in the same way the description of the 14th of July by a Tibetan unaware that it commemorates the taking of the Bastille would be, she understood neither the general meaning of the ceremony nor the role of the *Glud-'gong*".[73]

I will attempt to answer some of the many questions that still remain unanswered. For instance, why did the Regent Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho (1658-1705) institute the expulsion ritual within the framework of the commemoration ceremony? What role does the *glud 'gong* play? To whom and where is he sent?

We know that the *glud 'gong* ceremony, which took place on the 29th day of the second month of the Tibetan year during the Tshogs-mchod festivities in Lhasa, was performed by the abbot of Byang-chub-gling, the rNying-ma-pa monastery, in presence of the abbot of the rNam-rgyal college established at the Potala.[74] For understanding the reasons for establishing this ceremony, the Regent himself provides certain indications. The indications provided by the Regent himself, even though they are too brief and allusive to give a coherent picture, constitute precious clues for our research. In his work *VS*, he says:

> "My Lord (i.e. the Fifth Dalai Lama, 1617-1682) told me that long ago, when the Prince Mu-ne (bstan-po) fell ill in bSam-yas, the master Padmasambhava performed the *rGyal po rtse mdos*[75] ritual and the Prince recovered. Therefore, I have instituted on the 29th day (of the second month 1682) (the ritual) for my own benefit. The deity Ging Karahala and others precede the procession in a fiery dance. The oracles of Zhub-can and dGra-lha rDo-rje grags-ldan (manifestation of Pehar's speech in gNas-chung) escorted the *mdos*".[76]

73. Ariane Macdonald, 1971-1972: 654.
74. Concerning the establishment of this college, one may see Karmay, 1988b: 10.
75. On this ritual text, see below.
76. *nyer dgur rje bla mas sngon bsam yas su lha sras mu ne snyun gyis btab par slob dpon padmas rgyal po rtse mdos btang bas grol ba bzhin nged kyi phyir 'dzugs pa grabs sgrub sngon du 'gro ba'i mdos rdzongs tsha rngams kyi king (ging) ka ra ha la sogs 'chams/ zhub can dang/ dgra lha rdo rje grags ldan khog phebs kyi mdos rgyab dang bcas pa/* (*VS*, p.386).

Was the Regent facing health difficulties himself when he instituted the Tshogs-mchod festival? This is highly probable as the above account indicates, he had been recognised as the incarnation of Prince Mu-ne by the Fifth Dalai Lama, who in turn was considered the manifestation of the Prince's father, King Khri Srong-lde-bstan (742-797).[77]

According to the Fifth Dalai Lama's autobiography, the Regent had already faced certain health difficulties in 1680:

> "The rNying-ma-pa tantrist (*sngags 'chang*) called Chu-spe steng-pa was summoned to perform the ritual for nine days at Zhol. At the end of the rite, as the *rGyal po rtse mdos* was being led out, a whirlwind suddenly appeared, moving in the same direction as the *'gong po* (the *sna khrid*, the person leading the *mdos*) who was accompanied by dancers wearing masks. The ritual appeared to be very effective since the Regent's health gradually improved."[78]

The *rGyal po rtse mdos* ritual and the custom of sending a *'gong po* therefore existed before 1682, the year of the Fifth Dalai Lama's death and the Regent's establishment of the Tshogs mchod ceremony commemorating it. The custom of sending a man - whose main role, in my view, is, like that of the *ngar glud*, to lead the *mdos* - goes back at least to the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama. It was the Regent, however, who instituted the ritual within the framework of the Tshogs-mchod ceremony, for the purpose - at least the first year - of improving his health. The same ritual was supposedly performed by the monk rGyal-ba mchog-dbyangs when King dPal 'Khor-bstan fell ill.[79] The term *rgyal po*, 'king', in the title of the ritual text, refers to the deity rGyal-po Pe-har who became the protective deity of the dGes-lugs-pa at the gNas-chung monastery. It seems, however, as we shall see below, that the Regent always feared the aggessiveness of this deity.

The *rGyal po rtse mdos*, which forms the basis of the *mdos* ritual devoted to King Pe-har, is therefore the main ritual of the Glud-'gong rgyal-po State ceremony. Although the Regent does not use the term *glud 'gong* and the Fifth Dalai Lama only uses the term *'gong po* in his autobiography, it is clear that they are both referring to the *glud 'gong* and its expulsion. The Glud-'gong rgyal-po was regarded as the 'ransom for the body' of the Tibetan hierarchs (*rgyal ba'i sku glud*)[80] from at least the time of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.

The ritual text of the *rGyal po rtse mdos* is still unavailable. The fact that it was not included within the vast compilation of ritual texts, *RT*, suggests that it was not regarded as *gter ma*, in other words, a text concealed in the ancient past in order to be discovered later. Eye-witness accounts therefore remain our primary sources for the study of the Glud-'gong rgyal-po ceremony. Yet we know of the existence of such a text since Sle-lung bZhad-pa'i rdo-rje[81] quotes it extensively. According to Phur-lcog, author of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's biography, the *rGyal po rtse mdos* text prescribes not only one, but two *glud 'gong*, a point to which I shall return later.

The main text is supposedly accompanied by a mythical narrative concerning the *mdos* composed by rGyal-ba mchog-dbyangs.[82] According to Kong-sprul, the latter is also the author of the *rGyal po rtse mdos* itself.[83]

The main officiant of the *glud 'gong* ceremony in Lhasa is the abbot of gSang-sngags byang-chub-gling, a rNying-ma-pa monastery, even though it was founded by the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1651, just before his journey to China. Since the monks of the rNam-rgyal college had to escort the Dalai Lama, it was deemed important that the rituals they normally performed for his benefit be carried out even in his absence.[84] For this reason, the abbot of the rNam-rgyal college, on which depended the monastery of Byang-chub-gling, officially presided over the *glud 'gong* ceremony.

The ritual took place on the 29th day of the second month within the context of the Tshogs-mchod ceremony. It began in the afternoon, in front of the Jo-khang. No complete description of the ceremony seem to exist in any source I have so far seen and I will therefore only relate what seems to me most relevant to the origin myth:

> First, the abbot of Byang-chub-gling played a game of dice with one of the two *glud 'gong*. The abbot of rNam-rgyal, representing the Dalai Lama, sat on a raised throne, while the abbot of Byang-chub-gling sat on a lower throne nearby. On their right stood two government representatives. The abbot of Byang-chub-gling threw big white dice on a table placed before him, while the *glud 'gong* threw small black dice on a black cloth spread on the floor in front of the table. The government representatives kept track of the score. According to some sources, the black dice were marked with small dots so that the public would not be able to see the *glud 'gong*'s winning throws which were considered as evil omens

77. *VS*, pp.286, 360-62.
78. *zhol du sngags 'chang chu spe steng pas sgrub zhag dgu sngon du btang ste rgyal po rtse mdos phyir thon pa dang glo bur du 'tshubs shing 'chams dang bcas 'gong po 'gro phyogs su rlung rnams brgyugs pa'i lhongs rtags shin tu che ba ltar sde pa'i khams kyang rim bder song ba'i 'phrod ngo che/* (*DK*, Vol. II, p.362; see also Vol.III, p.395.
79. *NYM*, f.67b.
80. Thupten Sangay, 1974: 38.
81. *NgL*, pp.52-53.
82. *mdos kyi smreng (smrang)*, *NYM*, f.68a.
83. *TTGL*, p.62.
84. *VS*, p.320.

for the Dalai Lama's life and governmental affairs in the year to come.[85]

In the myth concerning the origin of the dice game contained in *ZM*, the gods play against the demons and the winners are entitled to rule over the universe for one year. This myth pertains to various rituals including the ransom of the soul ritual and I have already had the opportunity elsewhere to compare this version with those contained in the Dunhuang manuscripts.[86]

When the game is over, the two *glud 'gong*, bearing the presents they have received, are pursued by a troop of the Ging dancers. One of the *glud 'gong* heads southwards to bSam-yas while the other goes northwards, to 'Phan-po. Even though A. David-Néel "understood neither the general meaning of the ceremony nor the role played by the *glud 'gong*", she nevertheless provides us with a precious, albeit partial, description. A. David-Néel is convinced that this ceremony is akin to that of the Biblical 'scapegoat'. She compares the goatskin worn by the *glud 'gong* and his destination, 'the sands of bSam-yas', to the scapegoat and its expulsion to the Azazel desert during the annual feast of expiation (Yom Hakipurim). Moreover, she writes 'Lu Ky Gyal-po', which seems to be a transcription of Glud-kyi rgyal-po, 'King of Ransom', rather than Glud-'gong rgyal-po, whose meaning I shall discuss later.

Here is the description of part of the ceremony A. David Néel witnessed in 1920:

> "On the day of the ceremony, Lu Ky Gyalpo has already accumulated a considerable fortune, whether in money or in goods. When he leaves the town, harried by the boos and whistles of the crowd, more coins and objects are thrown at him by persons who wish to rid themselves of some painful memory, some illness that plagues them or any other misfortune which the scapegoat then bears away with him, along with the demon who caused it. These final gifts are carefully collected by a relative of the 'scapegoat' who follows him for this specific purpose. How the beneficiary will make use of this little fortune to increase it yet more we shall see later...
>
> Here Lu Ky Gyalpo is no longer finely attired as he was before while collecting his gifts, but, by some strange coincidence, is grotesquely clad in a goatskin and thus evokes the Biblical scapegoat. His face is concealed by a mask painted half white and half black and his head surmounted by a tall headdress consisting of a dishevelled black yak tail. As before he holds a yak tail in his hand".[87]

85. *Cf.* Thubten Sangay, 1974: 34.
86. Article No.10, pp.564-76; Article No.19, p.116 (Cross references needed)
87. David-Néel, 1924: 564-55 (649-60).



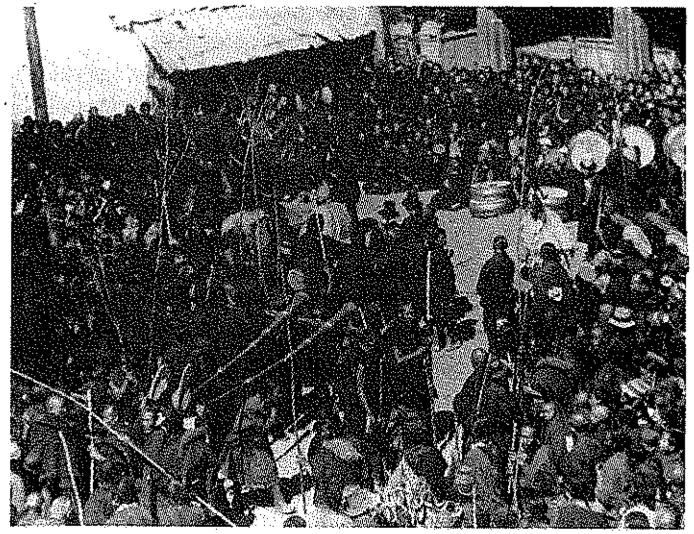


*Plate 35: In the courtyard of Jo-khang, Lhasa, the Glud-'gong rgyal-po, wearing a costume of white goat skin and surrounded by monks who perform the rite, is ready to depart.*



*Plate 36: The Glud-'gong rgyal-po, escorted by young monks, leaves the gathering for bSam-yas.*
*Plates 35 & 36 (H. Richardson, Lhasa 1946)*

**bSam-yas, destination of the southward bound *glud 'gong***

One of the two *glud 'gong* was sent to bSam-yas, the oldest Buddhist monastery of Tibet, for he carried the *mdos* destined to King Pe-har whose primary and main residence in Tibet is the temple known as Pe-har dkor-mdzod-gling situated on the north-eastern side of this monastic complex.

According to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's informant, the *glud 'gong* brought an effigy of the Dalai Lama to Pe-har's temple, but it is also said that the *glud 'gong* himself was in fact perceived as a *sku glud*.[88] In my view, however, his main role is that of a *ngar glud*; in other words, he is both a 'portrait' of the beneficiary and a guide (*sna khrid*) of the *mdos*.

A number of texts concerning the *mdos* ritual and known under the generic term of *rgyal mdos* are dedicated to Pe-har. In order to illustrate their contents, I have selected one which I consider representative, insofar as its structure and pantheon are concerned. It is entitled: 'The *mdos* for the King composed by the Master Padmasambhava'.[89] The attribution of this text to a semi-legendary personage is of no historical value here and simply indicates the real author's desire to give the text an aura of authenticity and prestige. The text nevertheless contains a mythical account that may be considered typical of the *rgyal mdos* genre and from which I have translated the following passage:

(f.2a) Kye! In times past,
Above in the blue sky,
There was a king.
The name of his parents were (2b):
Shed-kyi-skyed, the father and
Padma-'dren, the mother, mistress of the earth.
From their union,
King Pe-har, protector of the Law was born.
This great king
First resided in heaven
And was called gNam-lha dkar-po.[90]
Then he went to the land of Hor,
Where he became the protector of a vast hermitage
There he was named Srog-bdag rgyal-po.[91]
As he was endowed with the greatest magical power in the world,
He emitted all kinds of manifestations.
All his entourage, too.

88. *Cf.* Thubten Sangay, 1974: 33.
89. *Slob dpon padmas mdzad pa'i rgyal mdos* (*gTo 'bum dgos 'dod sna tshogs re skong*, hereafter: *gTo 'bum*, Gangtok, 1976).
90. Other deities also bear this name, *cf.* Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1975: 99.
91. The *rgyal po* spirits often bear this title.



Then, during ancient times,
In the neighbouring land of g.Yo-ru
Master Padmasambhava and
The king Khri Srong-lde'u-bstan
Built the glorious monastery of bSam-yas.
As the monastery had no guardian to protect its wealth,
Master Padmasambhava,
Having assembled an army of beings endowed with magical powers,
Set off to the land of Bha-ta-hor[92]
To subjugate the hermitage by force.
The Master ordered the King:
"Oh Pe-har, great King !
As you follow the ritual objects that we take with us,
I invite you, come to Tibet!"
King Pe-har replied:
"I will not come.
But if I must go (3a) then,
I need a god above,
I need a *klu* below,
I need someone to guard me from behind,
I need someone to lead the right wing (of the army),
I need someone to lead the left wing,
I need someone I can believe and trust,
I need a friend who is close to my heart,
I need someone who can distract me from my sorrow",
So he said.
The Master then told him:
"You may take dGos-byed smyug-'gyur
As god above.
You may take sMug-ri bu-mo
As *klu* below.
You may take the Black Tantrist with a dagger
To follow behind you.
You may take bTsan-rgod from g.Yas-ru Shangs,
To lead the army on the right.
You may take bTsan-rgod from Ra-kha-gdong,[93]
To lead the army on the left.
You may take the monk Chang-kun,
As an object of faith and trust.

92. The Gan-gru (Kan tcheou) region, *cf.* Stein, 1959: 120, 99.
93. These last two deities of the *btsan* type are evidently of Tibetan origin. It is curious that Padmasambhava should give orders to bring them from Hor to Tibet.

You may take Na-chung mdzes-ma,
As your bosom friend.
And now you, the *pho lha*, we must go!"
Thus you were invited from the land of Hor,
You, King and your entourage.
You came after having climbed hundreds of passes,
You came after having crossed hundreds of valleys,
You came after having traversed hundreds of rivers;
Finally, you reached bSam-yas, the holy place.
Master Padamasambhava
Having bound you by oath to his words,
Named you protector of the great holy place.
He conferred on you the title of dGra-lha chen-po.[94]
He made you the great protector of riches (of the holy place).
Oh! Great King, excellent hero!
Your colour is of the brightest red.
(You wear) a bamboo hat covered with black silk.
(You hold) a glittering razor in your right hand,
A lasso to catch the demons in your left,
(You are dressed in) a coat of bear skin,
An elephant is your mount.
When you arrived in bSam-yas,
how happy you were, when you circumambulated the exterior of (the monastery) three times!
How great your joy when you circled the centre three times!
What a sight you beheld when you circumambulated the interior three times!
When you reached the main temple,
you promised and pledged
never to harm the Tibetan kings.
As tokens, (the effigies) of a tiger, a leopard and a lynx were placed there.
When you reached gSer-khang-gling,
you pledged
never to harm the monks.
As tokens, a *chos gos*[95] and a stick were placed there.
When you reached the bDud-'dul-gling (4a),
you pledged
never to harm the Tantrists
As a token, a dagger was planted there.
When you reached the sGra-bsgyur-gling,

94. 'Warrior god', *cf.* Article No. 17, n.54.
95. *civara*, a costume worn by a Buddhist monk after the full ordination.



you pledged
never to harm the *lotsāba* and the *paṇḍita*.
As a token, a book was placed there.
When you reached the Rakṣa temples, at the South and North,
You pledged
never to harm the Bonpo.
As a token, the prime portions of meat and ale were placed there.
When you reached Khams-gsum-gling,
you pledged
never to harm men.
As a token, an arrow decorated with ribbons and eagle feathers was planted there.
When you reached the Byams-pa-gling,
you pledged
never to harm women.
As a token, a silver mirror was placed there.
When you reached the dGe-rgyas-gling,
you pledged
never to harm young men,
As tokens, a lance, a sword and an arrow were planted there.
When you reached the white *stūpa*,
you pledged
never to harm children,
As a token, white mustard[96] was planted there.
When you reached the red *stūpa*,
you pledged
never to harm the physicians,
As a token, all kinds of fragrant remedies were placed there.
When you reached the black *stūpa*
you pledged
never to harm the magicians,
As tokens, the flesh and hearts of various animals were placed there.
When you reached the blue *stūpa*,
you pledged
never to harm the young (women).
As tokens, all kinds of precious objects were placed there.
When you reached the multi-coloured *stūpa*,
you pledged
never to cause any harm to any beings apart from our foes who detest us.

96. *yungs dkar rgyal po* (Meyer, 1981: 179).

Show your magical power to these enemies..."[97]

This citation clearly illustrates the tradition according to which King Pe-har is a foreign deity and how he became the protector of bSam-yas. I will discuss the question of his origin later. It is also apparent that the *rgyal mdos*[98] type of ritual texts tend to glorify King Pe-har. This is probably equally true of the *rGyal po rtse mdos*.

As we have already noted, the *glud 'gong* was sent to bSam-yas because the *mdos* he was leading was intended for Pe-har. Futhermore, according to bShad-sgra dBang-phyug rgyal-po, minister of the Tibetan government in charge of restoring bSam-yas in 1851, the Pe-har dkor-mdzod-gling sheltered, on the first floor, a 'house of *mdos*' (*mdos khang*) where the *mdos* that served as a 'support' (*rten mdos*) for Pe-har was being rebuilt at that time.[99] It represented bSam-yas monastery, with the main temple, the four continents and the eight sub-continents. Supposing that the *glud 'gong* did indeed bring an effigy of the Dalai Lama, he probably would have placed it in the *mdos khang* dedicated to King Pe-har. It seems unlikely that he would have offered it to Tsi'u dmar-po as Nebesky-Wojkowitz suggested.[100]

This ritual tradition may appear as somewhat paradoxical since the *glud 'gong* and the *mdos* are escorted from Lhasa by the gNas-chung oracle, that is to say, by King Pe-har himself to whom they are sent. In fact, the deity who takes possession of the gNas-chung oracle is believed to be merely a manifestation of King Pe-har's 'speech' (*gsung sprul*).[101]

The Glud-'gong rgyal-po ceremony was not specific to Lhasa alone. A similar public ritual, which D. Macdonald had the opportunity to witness, also took place every year in Gyantse, in the province of Tsang:

> "In Gyantse, the person who plays the role of the scapegoat is fed and clothed by the State during the year preceding the ceremony. On the day of the ceremony the scapegoat, wearing nothing besides a goatskin stained with blood on his head and the intestines of a yak around his neck, stands in the Jong, or Fort. He holds a lamb's fresh liver in his right hand and nothing in his left. Following several long trumpet blasts, the rolling of drums, the clash of cymbals, and the incantations of the officiating lamas, the scapegoat scratches the ground with a stick to indicate that the time for ploughing and sowing is at hand. He then hurls the liver at the crowd and runs downhill towards the surrounding plains..."[102]

D. Macdonald indicated neither the date of the ceremony nor the scapegoat's destination. I have still not found any trace of a text pertaining to this ritual in Gyantse. Could it be included among the *rgyal mdos* texts mentioned above? In a letter, H. Richardson kindly informed me that the *glud 'gong* of Gyantse was called dPa'-bo ro-glud.[103] Although this designation is not without interest, it has not enabled me to identify the ceremony.

Ceremonies similar to the Glud-'gong rgyal-po were equally performed in rGyal-rong[104] and Mongolia[105] until recently.

However, when the cause of misfortune, such as an epidemic, as was the case of the Regent's illness, was ascribed to King Pe-har's wrath, the construction of a *rgyal mdos* was deemed necessary. One of the *rgyal mdos* texts devoted to Pe-har specifies that at the end of the ritual, the *mdos* must be taken to a 'temple haunted by a spirit (*'dre*)'.[106] We can presume that this *'dre* corresponds to King Pe-har who always dwells in a temple.

Finally, the theme of the *glud 'gong* has recently been taken up in a novel, for the purposes of Marxist ideology, to illustrate social injustice. The story takes place in Khams where the monks of a Buddhist monastery compel a young boy to play the role of the *glud 'gong* who is eventually banished.[107]

**The origin of the deity Pe-har (or Pe-kar/dkar)**

As previously mentioned, this deity is said to have been associated with bSam-yas monastery since its very foundation. The story of his arrival there and the role he plays in the Gesar epic, particularly in the episode with the Hor, are well known.[108] On the other hand, the function he serves in the *glud* ritual and how he came to be the guardian deity of

97. For the Tibetan text, see Text III.
98. A certain number of texts exist belonging to this type of ritual:
1) *GP*
2) *GK*
3) *Srog bdag rgyal po dkar po drug mdos*. Already cited by Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1975: 372, 382. It is in *RT*, Vol.69, Pi, pp.381-93.
4) *sPrul pa'i chos rgyal chen po'i mdos kyi gyer gzhung bsam don lhun grub* by Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (Fifth Dalai Lama) (Tōhoku, No.5816).
99. *KK*, p.164.
100. 1975: 510.
101. *Cf.* Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho, *gSol kha 'jam dpal gshin rje ma* (*KZ*, p.39a,4); *VS*, p.377.
102. Macdonald, 1930: 203.
103. Letter dated 20th November 1989.
104. Mansier, 1990: 138.
105. Oral information from C. Shagdarsuren, a scholar from the Academy of Sciences of Mongolia, Ulan-Bator.
106. *lha khang 'dre can du bskyal* (*GK*, p.321).
107. 'Jam-dpal rgya-mtsho, *sKal bzang me tog*, Peking, 1982, pp.64-110.
108. Stein, 1959: 284-91.

Drepung and subsequently of the Tibetan government have scarcely been studied.

The name Pe-har is attested in *BZh* where it first appears in the name given to the north-east temple at bSam-yas, Pe-har dkor-mdzod-gling, and then as a name of the protective deity of the same temple.[109] A deity known as Pe-har was therefore the object of a cult that dates back to at least the time when *BZh* was composed (c. A.D. 1000, ) in the form in which we know it today. It is unlikely, however, that the temple in question was considered from the very outset as the abode of such a deity. It was probably simply a *vihāra*, not only representing a continent of Buddhist cosmology but also served as the monastery's treasury (*dkor mdzod gling*) since it is said that excess riches were stored there (*dkor lhag ma*). The inventory of the monastery's goods after finishing its construction was equally preserved there which is why the temple is also referred to as *khram khang*, the 'archive depot'.[110]

Several other temples in bSam-yas also served various other functions. Thus the brDa-byor tshang-mang-gling to the south-east was primarily used as a kitchen[111] though also as a 'interpretation centre' (*brda sbyor*). The temple sGra-bsgyur rgya-gar-gling to the south-west equally sheltered a translation centre.

According to F.W. Thomas, the name Pe-har derives from the Chinese term *bai,* meaning white.[112] The orthographical variant *pe dkar* might be at the origin of this hypothesis. G. Tucci suggests a Turkish origin: *pag.*[113] In any event, both agree on the foreign origin of the cult of Pe-har. However, as sKyogs-ston already indicated in the fifteenth century,[114] *pe har* is also a Tibetan transcription of the Sanskrit term *vihāra*. sKyogs-ston points out, and rightly so, that the spelling *dpe kar/dkar* is simply a secondary form (*zur chag*). It is interesting to note that the original form of the transcription *bi har* is still preserved in certain texts.[115] On the other hand, *BZh* has: "he was invited to stay at the *dpe dkar* (*vihāra*) of Ra-sa".[116] But our most reliable sources remain the royal edicts where we read: "the *bi har* (*vihāra*) of Ra-sa (i.e. Jo-khang) was built".[117]

109. *BZh* (Stein, 1961: 41).
110. *BZh* (Stein, 1961: 41).
111. *tshang mang = thab tshang*, kitchen. It is also described as *'tsho ba zas kyi khang* or *g.yos khang* (*BZh,* Stein, 1961: 39).
112. Thomas, 1935, Part I, pp.299-300.
113. Tucci, 1949, Vol.II, p.736.
114. *Li shi gur khang* (Laufer, 1916: No.14).
115. *KhG*, f. 96a,6, 110a, 5.
116. *ra sa dpe dkar du bzhugs su gsol te* (Stein, 1961, p.11, l.10; p.16, l.7; p.31, l.9).
117. *ra sa'i bi har brtsigs* (*KhG*, f.110a,5); the form *dpe har* also occurs in the same work: *lha sa'i dpe har brtsigs* (*KhG*, f.128b,5). According to Ariane Macdonald, the name



The legend above, recounting the military expedition that brought Pe-har to Tibet, is not found in *BZh.* In other versions of the legend, the expedition is led by the prince Mu-ne btsan-po and not by Padmasambhava. The fact that this legend is not included in *BZh* suggests that it was developed later, probably during the Mongol domination. It is particurlarly widespread in the *bka' thang* literature. The Fifth Dalai Lama has taken it up in his autobiography to justify the claim that his family descended from the kings of Za-hor[118] who were believed to have been connected with the original place of the deity.

The worship of Pe-har is therefore not necessarily of foreign origin. He was named Pe-har after the temple Pe-har dkor-mdzod-gling of which he was the protector just as he was later called gNas-chung after he was installed in gNas-chung. As we shall see, the prototype of Pe-har appears in fairly early texts, such as the *'Jig rten mchod bstod.* His introduction to bSam-yas happened at a time when a guardian deity was systematically designated for each temple and is probably contemporaneous with the composition of *BZh.*

The cult of Pe-har was incorporated into the dGe-lugs-pa tradition at the time of dGe-'dun rgya-mtsho, the Second Dalai Lama (1475-1542) who designated him as the protector of Drepung. Under the Fifth Dalai Lama, the deity became the *dgra lha* of the Tibetan government and his oracle was established in gNas-chung at the foot of Drepung. The Regent Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho erected a temple there whose exceptional architectural features and construction material much impressed Western visitors at the turn of the century.[119] It was badly damaged during the Cultural Revolution and its restoration was undertaken by monks in 1987.

The benevolent aspect of Pe-har has been the subject of much controversy. Despite his pledge not to harm men his reaction is often feared. In this connexion, the Fifth Dalai Lama adopted a rNying-ma-pa assertion according to which Pe-har, although belonging in reality to the same class of divine beings as the five Jina, assumed the form of a 'worldly deity' in order to subdue the evil spirits.[120] For his part, the Regent states:

> "I had the gTsang-khang (main temple) of gNas-chung built. It is distinguished by eight architectural characteristics. This

Pe-kar or Pe-har is not a transcription of *vihāra,* but a name of a pre-Buddhist 'god of soil' ('dieu du sol') and Nyang-ral Nyi-ma 'od-zer was the 'inventer of the Pe-har god' (inventeur du dieu Pe-har) (Macdonald, 1977-1978: 1143). However, Macdonald does not give any evidence for her assertions.

118. *DK*, Vol.I, pp.24-28 (Tucci, 1949, Vol.II, pp.734-35).
119. For example, Waddell, 1906: 382.
120. *'jig rten dregs pa* (*DK*, Vol.III, p.445).

establishment is now abundantly wealthy. Lately, under the protection of Pe-har, the oracles have been indulging in such material goods. Needless to say, since the leader (Pe-har) is a *ye shes pa*, he is not subject to anger, but due to the covetousness of the ill-intentioned deities in his entourage, there were nothing but deaths. Those who made gifts (to these oracles) were not satisfied. Recently, in the year of the earth snake (1689), Sle-ma Tshe-dbang (an oracle) died due to the wrath of these deities" [121]

According to other authors, Pe-har is not even a *ye shes pa*.[122] In Buddhist tantric teachings the *ye shes pa* are transcendent deities whose knowledge of truth is superior to that of the *'jig rten pa* deities who have not transcended the phenomenal world.

Rituals such as the *rgyal mdos* are thus considered necessary in order to pacify the fearsome aspect of Pe-har. A tale ascribed to Nyang-ral (1136-1204), for example, relates how Pe-har's excessive agressiveness drove someone insane (*smyo 'bog*). Padmasambhava performed the *ar gtad* ritual to soothe him, but Pe-har had fled to his own country (Hor?).[123]

The term *ar gtad* generally designates a type of ritual in which malevolent spirits are subdued by meditation. It is the same kind of ritual as that performed by Legs-ldan rdo-rje (1512-1625) to 'pacify'[124] Tsi'u dmar-po, the other protective deity of bSam-yas. Curiously Pe-har's abode lies outside the monastery, both at Drepung and at Bla-brang. At Bla-brang, the oracle is not even allowed to speak while in trance.[125]

In the rNying-ma-pa tradition, Pe-har is held to be one of the eighteen 'wordly gods' (*dregs pa*) who were believed to have been subdued by Padmasambhava and then admitted into the four corners of the *maṇḍala*, when the master gave the *bKa' brgyad* initiation at mChims-phu near bSam-yas.[126] The *'Jig rten mchod bstod* - which is regarded as the fundamental text dealing with the non-Buddhist divinities who were incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon - provides a list of eighteen or nineteen such deities. Even though Pe-har does not appear in this list, it mentions the deity gNod-sbyin rgyal-po[127] who corresponds to the iconographical description of one of the three aspects of Pe-har in the

121. *nged rang nas gtsang khang bzo sna brgyad kyis 'phags pa bzhengs/ zang zing gi 'phrin las mkha' mnyam la lar babs sngar nas sku khog na rim nas chos skyong la dmigs dngos spyod ches pa/ ye shes pa khro ba ci la mnga' yang 'khor gdug can gyi 'khren ches pa/ nye lam sa sbrul sle ma tshe dbang khu ldog gis 'das/...* (*VS*, p.377).
122. *NgL*, pp.92-96.
123. *Pe har ar gtad kyi lo rgyus* (*DK*, Vol.I, p.14).
124. *rgyud 'jam du btang ba* (*TTGL*, p.345).
125. Oral information from Yon-tan rgya-mtsho who comes from this monastery.
126. *KZ*, f.20b, 4; 68b,3; *NgL*, p.92.
127. *'Jig rten mchod bstod pa sgrub pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* (*NyG*, Vol.32, p.374).



*rgyal mdos* liturgical texts.[128] gNod-sbyin rgyal-po occurs as one of Pe-har's names in most texts devoted to him.[129] It is this particular *yakṣa* that seems to have served as an iconographical model for depicting Pe-har. The same text also states that this deity may receive various forms of *mdos glud*.

It is obvious from the above that the question of Pe-har's origin cannot be settled in a few words. But it is possible that Pe-har is associated with the following story even though it does not allow us to reach any final conclusion. The monk Byang-chub blo-gros of the rMa clan was supposedly killed in retribution by the partisans of the 'Bro clan around the end of the ninth century, during the civil war between the 'Bro and the dBa'. It was believed that the spirit of the monk then changed into a 'king' who returned to torment the monarch dPal-'khor-btsan. So the monk rGyal-ba mchog-dbyangs performed the *rGyal po rtse mdos* ritual in order to appease the murdered monk's spirit.[130] Could the latter be the ancestor of Pe-har? This is plausible since this phenomenon frequently recurs in Tibetan tradition. The Buddhist monk Bran-ka dPal-yon, the famous minister of King Ral-pa-can (805-838), for example, was murdered because he was suspected of having an affair with the queen. According to the *Lo rgyus chen mo*,[131] his spirit became the leader of all the gods and demons. Similarly, Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, the third incarnation of the great scholar bSod-nams grags-pa (1478-1554) and contemporary of the Fifth Dalai Lama, was mysteriously assasinated. His spirit returned to the world and was deified under the name of King Shugs-ldan.[132] The cult of this deity was banned several years ago by the present Dalai Lama and is the subject of dispute among the dGe-lugs-pa themselves[133] and between them and the rNying-ma-pa. Finally, the Tenth Karma-pa of the Red Hat lineage who was involved in the Nepalese invasion of Tibet in 1792, died unexpectedly in Nepal[134] and the Tibetan government forbade the search for his next reincarnation. Later his spirit manifested itself as an evil spirit. Shes-rab dgongs-rgyal (1784-1835), the

128. *KZ*, f.10b.
129. For example, *KZ*, f.12b,5; 20b, 4 *et seq*.
130. *NYM*, f.67b, 68a; *TTGL*, p.62.
131. *KhG*, p.432.
132. Khri-byang Blo-bzang ye-shes, *dGe ldan bstan pa bsrung pa'i chos rgyal chen po rdo rje shugs ldan rtsal gyi gsang gsgum rmad du byung ba'i rtogs pa brjod pa'i gtam du bya ba dam can rgya mtsho dgyes pa'i rol mo* (in the volume of *Shugs ldan be bum*, no indication of dates and place of publication), folios 48a-49a. *Cf* also. Article No.8, p. 139.
133. *Gong sa skyabs mgon chen po mchog nas chos skyong bsten phyogs skor bka' slob snga rjes stsal ba khag cha tshang phyogs bsdus*, Dharamsala (undated). *Cf.* also Mumford, 1989: 125-30.
134. rDo-ring bsTan-'dzin dpal-'byor, *dGa' bzhi'i mi rabs kyi byung ba brjod pa zol med gtam gyi rol mo*, Sichuan, 1986, Vol.II, pp.862-67 (Shakabpa, 1967: 157-69).

abbot of sMan-ri monastery, made him a protector of the Bon religion and gave him the name of the First Karma-pa of the Red Hat lineage, Grags-pa seng-ge (1283-1349).[135]

Like other peoples, the Tibetans believe that victims of violent death return to haunt the living. These returning spirits must be expected and 'subdued', and, in the case of an important personage, even deified. The Bonpo have specific rituals (*gri 'dul*) destined to appease such spirits.[136]

Pe-har's evolution is remarkable in that he is presented as having the military and religious aspects of a Tibetan king, particularly those of Khri Srong-lde-btsan (742-797). Thus in the *rgyal mdos* ritual texts, the *rten mdos,* symbol of Pe-har's abode, contains figurines of his two wives, who, like the queens of Khri Srong-lde-btsan, are named 'Bro-bza' and Pho-yong-bza'. Pe-har's entourage is divided into four *ru,* like the armies of the Tibetan kings and all the social categories are represented there including the monks and Buddhist tantrists. Among them figures a Chinese monk named Chang-kun surrounded by monkeys.[137] Perhaps he corresponds to the famous pilgrim-monk Hsüantsang who, in Chinese novels, is always accompanied by a monkey.[138] The *rten mdos* is a replica of bSam-yas in that it is also a representation of Buddhist cosmography. King Khri Srong-lde-bstan is said to have often visited this monastery which was founded under his aegis.

### The social background of the *glud 'gong*.

None of the available written sources provides any indication on the social background of the Glud-'gong rgyal-po in the Sate Ceremony in Lhasa. H. Richardson kindly informed me that the *glud 'gong*, who was sent to bSam-yas, was recruited from Zhol, a village located at the foot of the Potala. Some of the men from this community are considered *pho yon* (*yan*), 'vagabonds'. Their task, among others, is to flog criminals and to dismember ritual effigies (*linga*)[139] in the official ceremonies performed for the benefit of the State.[140] Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'phrin-las further confirmed that the *glud 'gong* sent to bSam-yas was always provided by two families living in Zhol.[141] Hence he belonged to a social category comparable to that of the 'corpse-cutters' (*ro rgyags pa*) and butchers (*bshan pa*) in Central Tibet. According to H. Richardson, the *glud 'gong*

135. *rGyal chen grags pa seng ge'i mchod thabs,* f. 1a (manuscript); *cf.* Article No.8, p. 138.
136. *ZJ* (Snellgrove, 1969, p.118, ll.18, 20-21).
137. *rGyal mdos dkar po drug mdos kyi bca' thabs* (*RT.* Vol.69, pp.248, 351).
138. For example, Waley, 1961.
139. For illustrations, see Karmay, 1988b, 120-21, 139, 155, 165-67.
140. Letter dated 20th November 1989.
141. Oral information received from him in August 1987, Lhasa.



who went to 'Phan-po was provided by the Kun-'dus-gling monastery of Lhasa. It is known that this monastery owned an estate in 'Phan-po where a place called Glud-'gong-sgang was situated.[142] It is probably in relation to this place that the monastery was responsible for providing a tenant from there to play the role of the *glud 'gong*. In fact this responsibility was shared by another important house, that of 'Bri-khungs which is mentioned in the biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama:

> "As clearly indicated in the text of the *rGyal po btsan (rtse) mdos* ritual performed by the officiants of gSang-sngags byang-chub-gling at the end of the great Tshogs-mchod ceremony, it was customary to send a *glud 'gong* to the South and another to the North. But lately (the custom) of sending a *glud 'gong* to the North was abandoned. (The Dalai Lama) ordered the people of 'Bri-khungs, Kun-('dus)-gling, rTse-shod and Zhol to restore this tradition".[143]

It is clear from the above that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama reintroduced the second *glud 'gong*. It seems, however, that his injunction was not systematically applied thereafter since the photographs taken by H. Richardson in 1946 show only one *glud 'gong*,[144] whereas those taken by J. Guthrie at the end of the forties show two.[145]

The name Glud-'gong rgyal-po, translated by R. A. Stein as the King Ransom-Demon, is rather strange. In my opinion, it should be understood as the 'Ransom for the Demon-King', since the *glud 'gong* came to be considered as the ransom itself and was destined to King Pe-har in bSam-yas, even though his initial function was to 'guide' the ransom as we have noted above. As indicated by the term *rgyal 'gong*,[146] the term *'gong* here designates a category of spirits to which the *rgyal po* belong. The connotation of *rgyal po* as a category of spirits is absent from the Dunhuang manuscripts but appears in *BZh.* It is therefore evident that the

142. *Cf.* Thubten Sangay, 1974: 34. According to bKras-mthong Thub-bstan chos-dar, it is not Glud-'gong-sgang, but Klu-gong, because in this place the famous minister Ta-ra Klu-gong is said to have been exiled (oral information).
143. *tshogs mchod chen mo'i rjes 'brel gsang sngags byang chub gling pa nas rgyal po btsan (rtse) mdos kyi cho ga gzhung nang gsal glud 'gong bar lam nyams chag tu gyur skor 'bri khungs kun gling bla brang dang rtse shod/ zhol gnyer bcas pa snga srol nyams med khungs 'dzugs dgos rgyu'i bka' bsgyur gnang/...*(*NgR*, Vol.II, f.232b,5).
144. See the illustrations in this article (Photos, 1 and 2)
145. Normanton, 1988: 167.
146. According to Ariane Macdonald, Pe-har becomes a *rgyal 'gong* only when he speaks through an oracle (11977-1978, p.1140). She provides no source for this claim.

term *rgyal po* came to designate a category of spirits[147] whose attributes evoke those of the historical kings after the royal dynasty fell into decline around the mid-ninth century. This is not suprising given the fact that a great number of Tibetan kings died by violence.

According to a Chinese description of the Glud-'gong rgyal-po in Lhasa quoted by R. A. Stein, a black tent was erected on "the mountain of the Ox-Demon, on the other side of the river. When the Demon-King (Ox) seeks refuge there, big canons balls are fired in his direction to drive him away. He does not return to Tibet until a year later".[148] This description, about which Stein makes no comment, is somewhat problematic. To begin with, the Ox-demon mountain, supposedly located across the river opposite Lhasa,[149] remains difficult to identify. In addition, the *glud 'gong* himself was never called Ox or Demon-King Ox. Lastly, the *glud 'gong* never actually left Tibet.

Was the Chinese traveler describing the expulsion of someone accompanied by an ox? This is plausible since criminals were compelled to leave Lhasa riding a brown ox.[150] The origin of this custom will be discussed later. Another possible explanation is that the *glud 'gong*'s family waited for him on the opposite river bank with an ox to carry his 'gifts' for the rest of his journey. Nebesky-Wojkowitz states that the *glud 'gong* was given a white horse as mount, but this is probably due to some confusion with another ritual.[151]

## The Mythical Accounts

The mythical accounts under discussion in the last part of this article are not, unlike the *glud rabs* previously mentioned, mythical narratives of the *glud* ritual per se. Nevertheless, they present the notion of *glud* in different contexts and allow us to have a better understanding of this notion than through the analysis of the ritual alone. These accounts

147. The *rGyal po'i mdos phran* which is in *KS* is a good example for this type of ritual texts devopted to the propitiation of the *rgyal po* spirits. For Ariane Macdonald (1977-1978: 1140), the *rgyal po* spirits belong to the category of 'gods of the soil'.
148. Stein, 1981: 191; see also Imaeda, 1978: 335-36, 338-39.
149. This would be either Glang-bdud or bDud-glang in Tibetan. Such a placename does not, to my knowledge, exist on the other side of the river. Elsewhere, Glang-bdud is a name of a divinity in Bhutan, see Char-gos, *rNam thar mthong ba don ldan*, Kalimpong (undated) , f. 53b, 6.
150. lHa'u rta-ra Thub-bstan bstan-dar, *Tha'i ji khyung ram don grub rgyal po las zhabs gnas dbyung gis btson bcug rgyang 'bud btang skor (Bod kyi rig gnas lo rgyus dpyad gzhi'i rgyu cha gdams bsgrigs*, 'Don thengs brgyad pa, Lhasa, 1986), p.128; Aris, 1987: 143.
151. In the ritual of *rGyal po dkar po drug mdos* (*RT*, Vol.69, p.309), six beings are offered: a white horse with blue mane, a white she goat with red horns, a white cock with red comb, a white dog with red nose, a white monkey with red face and a white man with red turban.



not only show the evolution of this notion but also its mythical significance in various domains: social, cosmological, and popular beliefs.

When the *glud* is banished, especially when it happens to be a man, it is often accompanied by an ox, a ritual practice which recurs in several myths and which can be traced back to the beginnings of Tibetan civilisation.

(1) On the thirteenth stage of heaven, the lord of the Phyva gods, Ya-bla bdal-drug, has seven sons. The fourth (*bdun tshigs*) is unhappy with his father and his three elder brothers. He equally dislikes his mother and his three younger brothers. His father wants to send him away to the heaven of the latter's maternal uncle, the dMu, but he refuses to leave. So his father gives him, among other things, two gods as protectors, seven brother-gods as bodyguards, a conch shell and a sacred ox with white horns called lHe-glang ru-dkar. He agrees to leave with these gifts and settles down in the heaven of the dMu. The son he begets with a dMu wife is invited to descend on earth by the black-headed men to be their king. At first, he refuses because of the bad conditions prevailing in the land of men but eventually he accepts. His father then offers him a sacred yak and the same ox who accompanied him from the heaven of the Phyva gods. The son descends from heaven onto the summit of lHa-ri Gyang-to mountain in Kong-po[152] and becomes the first Tibetan king, gNya'-khri btsan-po.[153]

This myth concerns two gods, the father and the son. The former, unwanted by his original family, is expelled, while the latter, apparently retained by his own people, accepts man's invitation only after having been assured that the country was suitable for him. Both father and son are accompanied by a sacred ox (and other animals in the case of the father). Even though neither is explicitly considered as *glud*, both leave their native countries and need, like the *glud 'gong* in Lhasa, an ox to carry their presents.

(2) King Dri-gum btsan-po wishes to compete with his own minister Lo-gnam. The latter kills the king in Nyang-ro sham-po in the province of Nyang. The corpse is thrown into the Nyang-chu river where a *klu* seizes it as it floats by. The two sons, riding an ox named lHa-glang ru-dkar as in the preceding myth, are banished towards Kong-po. Later, when they attempt to recuperate the corpse, the *klu* demands as ransom (*glud*) a

152. *Cf.* Article No.14.
153. Bacot *et al*, 1940:81, 85-87; *ShDz* (Haarh, 1969: 213-16; Ariane Macdonald, 1971: 206-10); Article No. 18.

child whose eyes close from bottom to top, like those of a bird. Such a girl is found and offered in exchange for the king's corpse.[154]

As this story has been translated into French[155] and is fairly well known, I have given only the gist of the myth here. In this myth, the theme of two princely brothers expelled on an ox is associated with the notion of ransom represented by a girl with bird-like features. Although no allusion to the ritual is made, this story may be considered to be a mythical precedent of the *glud* ritual in its archaic form since the corpse is abducted by a water spirit who exacts a ransom in exchange. As already noted, the notion of exchange between man and spirit forms the very basis of the *glud* ritual.

(3) The following story relating the eviction of a *glud* accompanied by an ox is found in a Bonpo work. Since it provides elements that are extremely relevant to the study of Tibetan rituals in general, I have chosen to translate it here in full.

> (p.107) "The king (Khri Srong-lde-btsan, 742-797) who wanted Bon abolished and Buddhism established, began to practise Buddhism in secret. This was concealed from men but the gods knew and they were angered. The Lord (the king), the divine son, was criticised and his turquoise-soul stolen by evil spirits.[156] Epidemics, conflicts, lightning and hail befell Lhasa. The illness *lang dgu* afflicted man and the illness *dal rim* afflicted cattle. A diviner was sought and found in the person of sPe Ne-gu. When the king, the ministers and the people had gathered, the diviner began to perform the divination. The king asked: 'Why is our land beset with epidemics, conflicts, lightning and hail? Which ritual would be beneficial?' The diviner replied: 'Oh Lord! It is caused by an impure child born of an incestuous union and the magic of the demon Nal Mi-zan snying-dmar (Red heart Anthropophagous Incest). This child has teeth all in one piece, a round head, curly hair and hands similar to those of an aquatic bird. If this land is beset with misfortune, it is because the thirteen pure deities[157] of the world are offended by the existence of this child'. Everyone was upset. After having offered him all kinds of precious objects, such as gold and turquoise, the ministers addressed the diviner: 'Oh clairvoyant diviner! We beseech you to find this child and tell us which ritual should be executed'. The diviner said: 'May the

154. sTag-tshang dPal-'byor bzang-po tells in his *rGya bod yig tshang mkhas pa dga' byed* (Sichuan, 1985, p.132) that the two princes escaped riding on an ox.
155. Bacot *et al*, 1940: 97-100, 123-28.
156. *Cf.* Article No.19. p. 326.
157. These are all mountain deities.



> people gather to seek the child! The eighteen Bonpo belonging to the different clans must execute the *Glang nag thur sel* (the 'black ox ritual of elimination from below').[158] For this ritual, a black ox must be loaded with offerings and ransoms for men and women and mounted by the incestuous child. He must be banished in a southwesterly direction. This would be beneficial'.
>
> When a great crowd had gathered, the diviner started to look for the child. After a while he pointed to a fifteen year-old boy who was then seized and his mouth examined. His teeth formed a curve in a single piece as predicted in the divination. His hands were also examined. The fingers were webbed just like those of an aquatic bird. His head was round like a wooden bowl and his hair was curly.
>
> Then the eighteen Bonpo: gCo Gyim-bu lan-tsha and the others belonging to the different clans, performed the rite in the presence of the boy and the ox. The officiants repeatedly chanted prayers over the offerings and ransom. Finally the boy and the ox were evicted towards the south-west."[159]

Although the text of the *Glang nag thur sel* has not yet come to light, it is obvious that it refers to a purification ceremony in which a boy with abnormal physical features is considered impure and sent as a ransom to the demon Nal Mi-zan, the personification of incest. The context of the story lends an official character to the ceremony, which suggests that it may well be the prototype of the Glud-'gong rgyal-po in the annual State Ceremony in Lhasa.

This myth takes up a theme already encountered in the previous one, that of a 'monstrous' child offered in ransom. But here the child is explicitly rendered responsible for the calamities that afflict the country. The cannibalistic nature of the demon suggests that the child and the ox are offered to him as food. The previous myth does not mention how the *klu* disposes of the girl given to him as ransom. This difference is perhaps related to the fact that *klu* are regarded as vegetarian, whereas demons are considered carnivorous. By banishing the child, the pollution caused by incest is eliminated and the demon's wrath subdued. The fact that the term *glang nag* (black ox) appears in the the ritual's designation indicates the importance of its role. Let us recall here the Tibetan custom in which the banished criminal is given a brown ox as mount as if he were a *glud*.

(4) The following is a mythical account in which the ox does not play a role, but which pertains to the notion of *glud*. The great minister Ma-

158. The *sel* is a kind of purification rite, see *ZJ* (Snellgrove, 1969: 44-46).
159. See for the Tibetan text, Text IV.

zhang (maternal uncle) of King Khri Srong-lde-btsan established a law forbidding the practice of Buddhism while the king was still a minor. Later, the king shows a keen interest in Buddhism, but is opposed by Ma-zhang. The minister 'Gos Khri-bzang suggests to the king a way of eliminating Ma-zhang and thereby establishing Buddhism.

Under 'Gos Khri-bzang's orders, the diviners announce imminent health difficulties and political obstacles for the king and advise the execution of a ritual (*rim gro*) for his benefit.

To execute this rite, the two great ministers, 'Gos and Ma-zhang volunteer to be the *sku glud*, the 'body-ransom (of the king)'. The ministers must remain in a kind of underground tomb for three years. As soon as they enter the tomb, 'Gos escapes by cunning while Ma-zhang is enclosed forever.[160]

This story indicates the existence, during the royal period, of human ransom, especially for kings. According to a Bonpo work, the king Mu-khri btsan-po was attended by several priests. One of them had the task of performing the royal *sku glud* ritual.[161] This tradition was preserved throughout the following centuries until 1959, since the *glud 'gong*, as noted previously, was regarded as the *sku glud* of the Dalai Lama.

(5) In another myth, a man is actually sacrificed as a ransom (*glud*) for a sick person.

The Prince Khri-shang falls seriously ill. A diviner advises his parents to offer in ransom for his life the prince's servant who is of the same age. There follows a long discussion over the diviner's advice. The prince himself is against it. The servant, however, is finally sacrificed by a priest who performs the ransom ritual in order to 'exchange the flesh' (*sha brjes*). But the prince dies as soon as the servant is killed.

This ritual entails tragic consequences: the servant's parents seek revenge, the prince's parents overcome by grief and remorse commit suicide. The diviner is ashamed of his lie and the priest repents for his murder. The event provides the Master gShen-rab Mi-bo with the opportunity to deliver his salutary sermons.[162]

(6) In other mythical accounts, animals and not men are offered as ransom:

> "Srid-pa sNe-phrom is sent by his father on earth to establish the human race. There he sees a beautiful *srin mo* weaving. He sits at the head of the loom and the woman asks him:

160. *Bzh* (Stein, 1961: 13-15).
161. *GB, MS* in Oslo, f.13a, 7-8.
162. *ZM* (Karmay, 1977, No.4), Vol.I, p.311.



> 'This is a land without men. Whence did you come? Whither are you going?' Srid-pa sNe-phrom replies: 'My father, Lord of the Phyva gods, sent me from heaven to establish the human race'. A demon notices the god from afar and wants to take him away. So the woman fashions a monkey out of a piece of cloth and hides the god. The demon asks her: 'Where is the god ?' The woman replies: 'I have seen no one but this monkey'. So the demon takes the 'monkey' and leaves".[163]

The text then affirms that the custom of offering a monkey as a ransom for man was thus established. If the *srin mo* had not made a 'monkey' as a substitute for the god, he would have been seized by the demon and hence would not have been able to perform his duty.

The notion of 'exchange' is clearly apparent in all these accounts. It appears even more clearly in the following and plays on the idea of similitude.

(7) Vairocana, a Tibetan monk, returns to Tibet after having spent many years in India. He is suspected of practising Indian magic and having an affair with the queen. Although the king Khri Srong-lde-btsan wishes to defend him against these slanderous rumors, his ministers press him to banish the dishonourable monk. So the king secretly gives the order to find a man who physically resembles Vairocana. A man is found and thrown into the gTsang-po river while Vairocana is hidden in a pillar in the temple of bSam-yas.[164]

## Conclusion

The notion of *glud*, which is present at various levels in a great many rituals, is based on that of an offering destined to recapture what has been taken away by external agencies or to avert the wrath of a spirit. In this notion of exchange and reciprocity between man and spirit, the officiant acts as mediator.

Travellers in Tibet at the beginning of the century associated the *glud* ritual with the banishment of the 'scapegoat'. But the concept of the 'transfer of evil onto someone else' underlying the Biblical myth does not allow for such a comparison.

The *glud* ritual was commonly practised during the royal period. This is attested by contemporary documents which have proved essential for the study of this ritual. The officiants are always *bon* or *gshen* while the deities invoked are for the most part mountain deities in these ancient documents. In these sources, plants, cereals and other substances are

163. *dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags* (Article No.17 p. 226).
164. *VD* (Karmay, 1988b: 27).

mentioned as offerings just as similar substances are presented as substitutes for the body parts in later texts, without the notion of bloody sacrifice ever being mentioned. This ritual tradition has been preserved throughout the centuries by Tibetan religious tradition in various forms such as the *Gzh* ritual of both the Bonpo and Buddhist traditions and in festivals of different places such as the annual State Ceremony of Glud-'gong rgyal-po in Lhasa.

The myth of the first king gNya'-khri btsan-po is essential for the study of ritual on account of its being the original source and its continual existence in rituals and, therefore, in popular beliefs. The notion of *glud* plays an important role in the myth of the king's descent from heaven, alongside that of ransom of the soul[165] and that of purification.[166]

**Transliteration of the Tibetan texts.**

**Text I**

kye snang rtsam (tsam) dang po la/
yul gyi ming btang(btags) te/
rgyal (rgya) yul stang bzang na/
rgya mkhar stegs pa na/
pha dang yab kyis (kyi) mtshan/
rgya rje mi btsan rmang po lags/
ma dang yum gyi mtshan/
rgya nag nyi khri (lags)/
btsun mor bshos pa'i sras/
ming po dral po lags (la)/
rgyal bu sra brtan lags/
sring mo lcam mo ba/
rgyal lcam dkar mo lags/
rgyal (rgya) rje yab yum dang/
rgyal sras lcam dral la/
ya bla (ya la) bdud kyis res kyang bab/
ma bla chud kyi byin yang chags/
g.yen dgu'i dal kha babs/
btsan po kha zhi (bzhi) 'drol/
lha srin kun kyang g.yos/
rgya rje stang dang dbyal/
nad dang snyung gi (gis) zin/
a na na'i nams (nam) ma lang/
a chu chu'i mun ba (ma) rub/
rgya bon legs btang rmang po spyan drangs nas/

165. See Article No.19.
166. See Article No.21.



lto dang spyad (gto dang dpyad) bgyis pas/
nad gyi ngo yang zin/
srin gyi sde yang rig/[167]
sku glud mi 'tshal dgu cig 'tshal/
ngar zan ngar glud 'tshal lo skad/
der rgya khol pha (po) bcu yis/
rgya yul 'brim thang skor gyis bskor/
rgya mi phyug po grong bdun la/
'bru sna mang thun (bdun) nyung bdun la/
khre dang 'bras gnyis/
gro dang sran ma gnyis/
nas dang so ba gnyis/
bra bo zur gsum de dang bdun/
gsang (sangs) phye dkar gyis ldad nas btags/
ya rab gser yul nas/
gser la zhun du bzhus/
khyung lung dngul mkhar nas/
dngul la zong gyis dras/
lcogs yul g.yu mkhan gyis/
g.yul la bdar du bdar/
sum yul zangs mkhan gyis/
zangs la zhun du bzhus/
zom shing lcags mkhan gyis/
lcags la bdar du bdar/
bse mkhan mda' mi yis/
bse la bdar du bdar/
sa le dung yul nas/
dung la bdar du bdar/
ngar zan ngar glud 'phad (?) du bgyis/
mi ru bgyis pa byad re legs/
rta ru bgyis pa bang re mgyogs/
ngar glud mgo la skra med na/
rbab ser bya spu mgo yi skra/
ngar glud dpral na mig med na/
spu gzi khra bo blta ba'i mig/
'gron bu'i 'thong bshad tshems su bgyis/
leb rgan dmar po ljags su bgyis/
ngar la nang na drod med na/
snang ma sgron shing drod du bgyis/

167. These lines (22-28) correspond to those of a Dunhuang manuscript: *nu nu nam myi nangs...chu chu nyin mi nub...mo btab phya klags/ gto zhing dpyad dpyad na/ snyung gyi zo yang tshal skran gyi lde yang rig*...(Lalou, 1958, p.9, ll.37-40, p.11, ll.64-68, p.12, ll.84-86).

slas me dri zhim snying du bgyis/
se mo lo dros sha ru bgyis/
mtshal chen lcog la khrag du bgyis/
rma bya'i gdong (mdongs) chen zhal du bgyis/
ya bdud bcu gsum spyan snga nas/
ma bdud bcu gsum spyan snga nas/
ngar mi ngag snyan si li li/
'gro ba'i stabs sdug ye re re/
ngar bu glu len skyu ru ru/
srid pa'i lha 'dre snyan dgu'i phyag tu phul te btangs/
lha srin sde brgyad glud kyis mnyes/
rgya rje yab yum sras rnams bzung ba btang/ bcing pa bkrol/
na ba phan la 'khun pa dang/
sngon tsam de ru phan cig bsod/
de ring shen (gshen) dang yon bdag gis/
lha srin sde brgyad thams cad la/
ngar glud brgya'i glud 'bul lo/
srid pa'i lha 'dre kun mnyes nas/
nad dang gnod pa kun zhi nas/
lha 'dre zhal kha bsgyur du gsol//
*brGya bzhi bdud zlog*, *gTo phran*, Dolanji 1977 (Karmay, 1977, No.71), pp.312-15.

**Text II**

bsvo bsvo bsvo/
btsan rje ni ci la bgyis/
za ba ni sha la rngam/
'thung ba ni khrag la hab/
len pa ni srog dbugs len/
sdong ba ni bgegs dang sdong/
'grogs sa ni gnyan dang 'grogs/
mgon sa ni btsan bon mgon/
'tshe ba ni gsas la 'tshe/
gshen rab ni mthu btsan pas/
dzvo dmar ni glad (kald) la gzer/
srog thag ni gshen la bcol/
tha tshig gi yas stags srid/
srog glud la nam mkhas brngan/
dbugs glud la rlung gi (gis) brngan/
drod glud la mar myes brngan/
khrag glud la chab kyis brngan/
sha glud la kham sas brngan/
mthun (thun) rdzas ni 'di bsham na/



ngan 'dras ('gras) kyi nong pa thol/
*Srid pa spyi skong snang srid spyi mdos*, manuscrit, f.10a,2-10b,5.

**Text III**

kye sngon gyi bskal pa'i dang po la/
dgung sngon mthon po'i yar steng na/
rgyal po'i sku gcig bzhugs pa la/
rgyal po yab dang yum gyi mtshan/
yab ni shel gyi bskyed kyi yab/
yum ni sa bdag padma 'dren/
de gnyis srid cing sprul pa las/
chos skyong rgyal po dpe ha ra/
skyes bu rgyal po chen po ste/
dang po gnam gyi steng du byon/
gnam lha dkar po zhes su grags/
bar du hor gyi yul du byon/
sgom grva chen po'i srung ma mdzad/
srog bdag rgyal po zhes su grags/
'jig rten gnas na mthu bo che/
sprul pa rnam pa sna tshogs 'gyed/
'khor dang bcas pa thams cad kyis/
de nas bskal pa tha ma la/
g.yo ru dpal gyi sa mtshams su/
slob dpon padma 'byung gnas dang/
btsan po khri srong lde'u btsan gyis/
bsam yas dpal gyi chos 'khor bzhengs/
de la dkor srung med pa las/
slob dpon padma 'byung gnas kyis/
sprul pa'i dmag tshogs bsags nas su/
bhata hor gyi yul du byon/
khros pa'i tshul gyis sgom grva bcom/
mchod cha'i phyi la 'brengs nas su/
dpe har rgyal po chen po khyod/
bod la spyan 'dren 'gro dgos gsungs/
de skad tsam zhig gsungs pa dang/
rgyal po chen po'i zhal na re/
nga ni bod la mi 'gro'o/
cis kyang bod la 'gro dgos na/
steng du lha gcig dgos lags so/
'og tu klu gcig dgos lags so/
slad kyi rjes nyul dgos lags so/
g.yas kyi ru 'dren dgos lags so/
g.yon gyi ru 'dren dgos lags so/

yid ches gdong gtad dgos lags so/
bsam pa'i grogs shig dgos lags so/
sku yi skyo bsangs dgos lags so/
de skad tsam zhig zhus pa dang/
slob dpon padma 'byung gnas kyis/
dgos byed smyug 'gyur bya ba de/
steng gi lha ru khrid nas byon/
smu rigs bu mo bya ba de/
'og gi klu ru khrid nas byon/
sngags pa nag po phur thogs de/
slad kyi rjes nyul khrid nas byon/
g.yas ru shangs kyi btsan rgod de/
g.yas kyi ru 'dren khrid nas byon/
ra kha gdong gi btsan rgod de/
g.yon gyi ru 'dren khrid nas byon/
gnas brtan chang kun bya ba de/
yid ches gdong bltas khrid nas byon/
na chung mdzes ma bya ba de/
bsam pa'i grogs su khrid nas byon/
de nas pho lha 'gro dgos gsungs/
hor gyi yul nas spyan drangs te/
rgyal po chen po 'khor bcas rnams/
la brgya tsam zhig brgal nas byon/
lung brgya tsam zhig brgal nas byon/
chu brgya tsam zhig sgrol nas byon/
chos 'khor dpal gyi bsam yas bslebs/
slob dpon padma 'byung gnas kyis/
bka' dang dam la btags nas su/
chos 'khor chen po'i srung mar bskos/
dgra lha chen po'i ming yang btags/
dkor bdag chen por mnga' yang gsol/
skyes mchog rgyal po chen po khyod/
sku mdog dmar po 'od zer 'phro/
dbu la snyug zhva dar nag 'thibs/
phyag g.yas spu gri 'bar ba bsnams/
g.yon pas bdud kyi zhags pa 'dzin/
sku la dom gyi slag pa gsol/
chibs su ba glang sna ring bcibs/
zab (zan) yangs gling du byon pa'i tshe/
phyi bskor thengs gsum dvangs re spro/
bar bskor thengs gsum nyams re dga'/
nang bskor thengs gsum ltad mo che/
dbu rtse ri (rigs) gsum byon pa'i tshe/



btsan po rnams la mi gnod pa'i/
khas blangs dam bca' de ru mdzad/
stag gzig gung gsum rten du 'dzugs/
gser mkhar (khang) gling du byon pa'i tshe/
rab byung rnams la mi gnod pa'i/
khas blangs dam bca' de ru mdzad/
chos gos 'khar bsil rten du 'dzugs/
bdud 'dul gling du byon pa'i tshe/
sngas pa rnams la mi gnod pa'i/
khas blangs dam bca' de ru mdzad/
dpal gyi phur bu rten du 'dzugs/
sgra bsgyur gling du byon pa'i tshe/
lo pan rnams la mi gnod pa'i/
khas blangs dam bca' de ru mdzad/
glegs bam po ti rten du 'dzugs/
rakṣa steng 'og byon pa'i tshe/
bonpo rnams la mi gnod pa'i/
khas blangs dam bca' de ru mdzad/
sha phud chang phud rten du 'dzugs/
khams gsum gling du byon pa'i tshe/
skyes pa rnams la mi gnod pa'i/
khas blangs dam bca' de ru mdzad/
mda' dar rgod sgro rten du 'dzugs/
byams pa gling du byon pa'i tshe/
bud med rnams la mi gnod pa'i/
khas blangs dam bca' de ru mdzad/
dngul dkar me long rten du 'dzugs/
sde brgyad (dge rgyas) gling du byon pa'i tshe/
stag shar rnams la mi gnod pa'i/
khas blangs dam bca' de ru mdzad/
'khor gsum srid pa rten du 'dzugs/
mchod rten dkar por byon pa'i tshe/
byis pa rnams la mi gnod pa'i/
khas blangs dam bca' de ru mdzad/
yungs dkar rgyal po'i rten du 'dzugs/
mchod rten dmar por byon pa'i tshe/
sman pa rnams la mi gnod pa'i/
khas blangs dma bca' de ru mdzad/
sman sna dri bzang rten du 'dzugs/
mchod rten nag por byon pa'i tshe/
mthu pa rnams la mi gnod pa'i/
khas blangs dam bca' de ru mdzad/
sha sna snying sna rten du 'dzugs/

mchod rten sngon por byon pa'i tshe/
na chung rnams la mi gnod pa'i /
nor rdzas sna dgu rten du 'dzugs/
mchod rten khra bor byon pa'i tshe/
sdang ba'i dgra rnams ma gtogs pa'i/
sems can yongs la mi gnod pa'i/
khas blangs dam bca' de ru mdzad/
sdang ba'i dgra la cho 'phrul ston/...

*Slob dpon padmas mdzad pa'i rgyal mdos (gTo 'bum dgdos sna tshogs re skong*, Gangtok 1978), pp.69-74.

**Text IV**

rgyal pos (1) bon bsnubs par dran nas/ chos spyod pa'i bsam pa dran ste/ mis ma tshor lhas tshor bas (2)/ srid pa'i lha rgod gnyan po rnams kyis (3) de ma bzhed nas/ rje btsan po lha sras kyi spyan yang babs (4)/ 'dre dang bdud kyis bla g.yu (5) brkus/ lha sar nad yams 'khrugs pa thog dang ser ba byung/ mi nad lang dgu dang phyug nad dal rim byung/ der yul khams su mo ba btsal du btang ba la/ spe ne'u gu bya ba'i mo ba gcig btsal nas 'ong/ der btsad po rgyal blon 'bangs gsum 'dus nas mo btab pa las/ rgyal po'i zhal na re/ da yu gu'i rgyal khams 'di ru nad yams dang 'khrugs pa dang thog dang ser ba dang zhug ngam chen po dar ba 'di yi nyes skyon ci yin/ gto ni ci phan dris pa la/ spe ne'u gu'i zhal na re/ rgyal po lags/ yul khams 'di ru nad yams dang 'khrugs pa dang mi dge ba sna tshogs byung ba de rnams/ pha med pa'i nal phrug cig gis nal sna phogs zin pas/ de nal mi zan snying dmar (6) gyi cho 'phrul yin pas/ kha so 'khor ba (7) skra li ba mgo par bu'i (8) gzugs su 'dug/ lag pa chu bya'i sder mo 'dra ba/ de lta bu'i nal phrug des (9) gdon zin pas/ gtsang ma'i lha rigs mgur lha bcu gsum gyis de ma bzhed pas/ yul du nad yams dang mi bde ba sna tshogs byung ba yin/ de la rgyal blon kun gyis (10) rtog pa skyes pas/ spe ne'u gu la gser g.yu rin po che sna tshogs yon du phul nas/ blon po kun gyi zhal na re/ ye mkhyen mo ba lags/ nal phrug de ngos 'dzin pa dang/ phyi ma'i gto ji (11) phan dris pa las/ de la spe ne'u gus smras pa/ mi mang po 'tshogs pa'i dus na nal de ngos zin nas/ bon po rus mi gcig pa bco brgal (12) la/ glang nag thur sel dang 'gar nag thur sel bya/ glang khams pa cig la yas btags (13) dang pho glud mo glud bkal la/ de'i steng du nal phrug de bskyon la/ nyi ma lho nub mtshams su bskyal te btang na phan no zer/ der mi che dgu ring bcu mang 'tshogs pa'i gal du/ spe ne'u gu kun tu 'grim zhing bltas pa la/ bu tsa lo bco lnga ba cig la 'dzub mo btsugs nas/ der kun gyis (14) bzung nas (15) de'i kha ru bltas pa la/ spe ne'u gu'i mo bzung ba bzhin/ kha dung so 'khor nas so bar med pa cig gda'/ lag pa la bltas pas kyang chu bya'i 'dzub (16) ltar bar rnams 'brel bar snang/ mgo bar bu'i (17) dbyibs su 'dug cing skra li bar gda'/ der yul khams su gco gyim bu lan tsha la sogs bon po rus mi gcig pa bco brgyad bsdus nas gto rnams byas/ glang khams pa cig dang nal bu lhan du bgrang/ yas dang glud du gyer gyer (18) nas/ nyi ma lho nub mtshams su spyugs (19) ste btangs/ glud dang glang bu 'khyams zhing song/ ....



A certain number of different readings exist in the two copies of the text that was consulted. They are are noted as follows:
A = *SG*, pp.107-111.
B = The manuscrit of the same work kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Fond tibétain No. 493), Paris.

1. A,B: rgyal po yi; 2. A,B: mi'i ma tshor yang lha'i tshor; 3 A,B: rnams gyi; 4. A: sras kyis, B: sras spyan; 5. A: brla g.yu, B: bla g.yang; 6. A: rnyil dmar, B: rnying mi zan; 7. A: kha so'i, B: kha dung so'i; 8. A: 'khor bar bu; 9. A,B: phrug de gdon; 10. A,B: kun gyi; 11. A: phyi ma'i gto' ci , B; phyi mi'i gto ji'i; 12. B: brgyad brgyad; 13. A,B: yas stag; 14. A,B: kun gyi; 15. A: kha so'i, B: kha dung so'i 'khor na; 16. A: 'dzu'u; 17. A: 'go bar bu'i, B: gho par bu, 18. A, B; bsgyer bsgyer; 19. A, B: spyu

# The Local Deities and the Juniper Tree: a Ritual for Purification *(bsang)*

Among Tibetan popular rituals, fumigation offering in its regional diversity is perhaps the most widely practised. It is not restricted to Tibet alone but extends to regions beyond its borders permeated by Tibetan culture or converted to Tibetan Buddhism.

This ritual may be performed by any individual regardless of his social status. It is performed daily at home or in a public place, and occasionally on mountains. In certain regions, such as Amdo, the ritual is the prerogative of men, whereas in Central Tibet women may also perform it. It has a social dimension, which accounts for its presence in all types of festivals, whether lay or religious, even such social ceremonies as the welcoming of an important lay or religious person.

In theory, the primary function of this ritual is purification. Its original meaning, however, has undergone considerable changes over the centuries, to the extent that nowadays even the participants themselves often give very different interpretations of its origin.

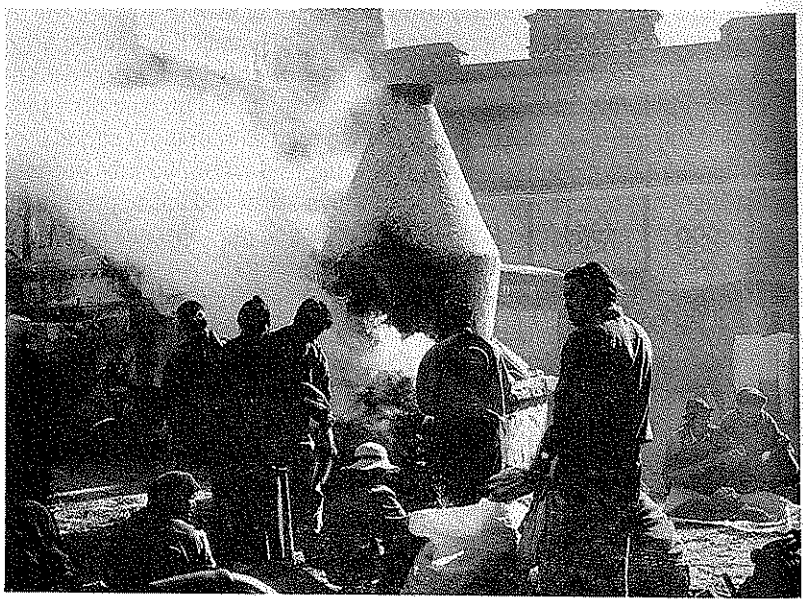


*Plate 37: bSang in front of Jo-khang, Lhasa (SGK 1995)*



In addition to this popular ritual, there is another type of purification ritual known as the 'purification of Ge-khod'. It belongs to the liturgical tradition and is more religious in character. It can only be performed by qualified officiants. In Bonpo doctrinal and textual classification, both these types of purification ritual belong to the so-called 'black-water' (*chab nag*) tradition. However, the 'purification of Ge-khod' is always performed as a preamble to other, very elaborate rituals, of which it forms an accessory but obligatory part, and which belong to the liturgical tradition called 'white water' (*chab dkar*).[1] The texts relating to the various aspects of this tradition will be discussed in a later section.

In spite of their differences, as much in practice as on the institutional level, both the *bsang* and the 'purification of Ge-khod' are based on the same religious concept. We propose first to examine the actual meaning of these rituals, in other words, their connection with the origin myth, the indigenous beliefs they reflect as well as their social, religious and political backgrounds. We will first treat the popular *bsang* ritual before analysing its relation to the 'purification of Ge-khod' which belongs to the liturgical tradition.

### The terminology of the purification ritual

At the outset, it is important to define the term *bsang*, meaning and ritual implications of which have led to some confusion concerning its interpretation by Western scholars and Tibetan Buddhists alike. The former have attempted to connect it with the term *bsang bu*, meaning 'food',[2] while the latter have assimilated it with incense offerings referred to in the Buddhist scriptures, thus endowing it with an Indian origin, which, in their eyes, had more prestige.[3] Under the influence of this Buddhist interpretation, the *bsang* ritual, while preserving its indigenous procedure as well as its social and cultural dimensions, came to be conceived of as a fragant offering to the gods. This interpretation eventually imposed itself with the coining of the Buddhist expression *bsang mchod*, 'offering of *bsang*'.[4] A similar tendency can be observed in

1. On the classification of the Bon doctrines, see Snellgrove, 1967: 16-18; Article No.14, p. 215.
2. Spanien, 1981-1983: 245.
3. For an example, see *SCh*.
4. This expression is an abridged form of *bsang dang mchod pa* (*RPS*, pp.10-11) . It is already current in *RPS*, p.3 and *dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags* (Article No.17: 18b, 19a). Another term of very recent origin is *bsang gsol*. It is often used among the Tibetan refugees in India to indicate a type of the *bsang* ritual having a political connotation (Sihlé, 1993). It is found in writings of recent authors, like Thu'u-bkvan Blo-bzang chos-kyi nyi-ma (1737-1802) who uses it as a contraction of the expressions *bsang mchod* and *gsol mchod* (Lokesh Chandra, 1963: 285) The expression *gsol mchod* is in fact the inversion of *mchod gsol*, a very old term (*PT* 126, l.142). The *gsol mchod*

later Bonpo tradition. A good example of the *bsang mchod* genre is a well known and widely used text composed by the Fifth Dalai Lama, entitled *bSang mchod bkra shis 'khyil ba*. In order to compose it, he says, he consulted a series of texts (*bsang yig*) ascribed to Padmasambhava[5] to whom we shall return below. The text, however, appears to be nothing more than a Buddhist adaptation of an indigenous ritual in which the definition of the term *bsang* is omitted.

Upon closer investigation of the ancient texts, it seems the term *bsang* derives from the verb *bsang ba*, to 'purify' and is etymologically connected with the verb *sangs pa* 'to illuminate' or 'to awaken'. Hence the verb *bsang ba* is closely associated with rituals involving fire and fumigation. It does not refer to the sense of taste or smell despite the smoke generated by the burning of aromatic plants. It is this last aspect, however, which allowed the Buddhists to associate it so easily with incense, one of the five types of offerings commonly used in Buddhist rituals.

Why is the *bsang* a 'purification' ritual and what exactly is it supposed to purify? Before attempting to answer these questions, let us examine the following passage from an important ritual text that shows how and in which sense the verb *bsang ba* is used:

"With this essence from the forests of the mountains above,
Incense with a pleasant fragrance and correctly prepared,
Let us purify the gods above
Let us also purify the *klu* below
as well as the *gnyan* in the middle.
Let us purify our seats,
Our clothes and objects,
May everything be purified!"[6]

Each injunction ends with the imperative form of the verb *bsang ba*:[7] *bsang bar bya* ('let us purify' or 'we must purify'). 'To purify' may be too vague a translation. We use it here for lack of a better term: for instance, in purification rituals involving water, the verb *bsang ba* is replaced by *gtsang ba*, 'to cleanse',[8] which derives from the term *tshangs* 'clean'. The verb *bsang ba* therefore implies purification through fumigation, whereas *gtsang ba* connotates 'cleansing' by sprinkling.[9]

If we are indeed dealing with a purification rite, it is only logical that we also examine the term used in this context to express the notion of defilement or impurity. Various terms, such as *grib*, are used to express defilement in general, but in the texts concerning the purification rituals, two terms recur more frequently than others. The first, *dme*, 'impurity', refers more particularly to the type of impurity incurred by murder, especially of a member belonging to the same family or clan. The rite is supposed to 'purify' (*bsang ba*) this type of impurity through fumigation. The second term, *mnol*, also implies impurity, but more in the sense of 'pollution' that is 'purified' (*dag pa*) by sprinkling water or another liquid. This distinction, however, is not always strictly observed in the ritual texts.[10]

These purification rituals are based on the idea that the deities and the environment have been 'defiled' (*phog pa, 'bags pa*) as a result of man's own impure nature and activity. In other words, the deities are offended by what man does to himself and to his environment. Consequently they become estranged and withdraw their favours. Man must therefore accomplish a purification rite each time he has committed an impure deed. The rite must be performed regularly, for one may, unknowingly, commit some unfavourable deed against oneself and thus against one's own deities. One must therefore abstain from certain forbidden activities with which we shall deal below.

**The notion of impurity**

We will attempt to explain this concept through the myth relating the battle between King Dri-gum btsan-po and his minister Lo-gnam which comprises a number of elements fundamental to the notion of impurity. The king, who is considered divine, cannot be defied by anyone. But he orders his own minister to challenge him. The latter agrees, but on the condition, among others, that the king place the corpse of a monkey on his right shoulder and that of a cat on his left before engaging in

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ritual involves no fumigation, *cf. PhLMG*.

5. *KSh*, p.21.
6. *steng gi lha yang bsang bar bya/ 'og gi klu yang bsang bar bya/ bar gyi gnyan yang bsang bar bya/ gdan khri rnams kyang bsang bar bya/ chas gos rnams kyang bsang gyur cig/* (*SNg*, p.2)
7. In *PT* 1042 the expression *mkhan sprus bsang* (l.59) is translated as 'la bouche purifiée avec l'ellébore' (Lalou, 1953). But the mouth (bouche) does not occur there. The expression should be translated by 'purified by the smoke of artemis'. The expression *mkhan spru* seems to refer to names of two different plants: artemis (*mkhan pa*) and *spra ba*, a variety of umbelliferae (*cf.* Meyer, 1901: 173). The artemis is commonly used in the *bsang* ritual, see Text III, l.33. Still in *PT* 1042, the expression *gsang* (*bsang*) *gis gdab* (ll.27-28) is translated by 'enfoui secrètement' (Lalou, 1953: 13, 16). A similar expression occurs in Text III, l.8: *bsang gdab pa*, 'purify (by means of smoke)'. The term *bsang* is also found in *Mahāvyutpatti* (Sakaki, 1916-26): *aśvamedhayajña* (5061) is translated by *rtas bsang gi mchod sbyin* or *rtas gtsang gi...*, 'sacrifice of the purified horse' and *proksana* (4757) by *bsang gtor*, 'aspersion', 'lustral water'.
8. *SNg*, p.1.
9. *rme (dme) na tshan dang spos kyis bsang/ mnol na gtsang ma khrus kyis krus/* (*ZJ*, Vol.Kha, f.65), 'if it is defiled, purify it with the *tshan* and incense; if it is polluted, wash it with the lustral water'.
10. *Cf. rme (dme) ba dag la mnol ba tshang/* Text II, l.70.

battle. Because of this pollution, the king loses the favour of his protecting deities who abandon him. This myth has evidently undergone significant changes which have given rise to various versions. In a Dunhuang manuscript, the minister is the one who takes a monkey out from under his armpit, which immediately drives away the King's deity lDe-bla gung-rgyal. The pollution is so powerful that the deity is projected (*'phang ba*) all the way to the snow-capped summit of Mount Ti-se (Kailash). The manuscript does not specify whether a monkey or its corpse are concerned.[11] But we know that the mythical accounts presented in the Dunhuang manuscripts tend to be abridged, whereas those in later sources are more developed. At any rate, in the later texts, the corpse of an animal is specifically mentioned,[12] even though the animal species may vary from one text to the other. Particularly relevant here is that the deity is said to retract his favour as soon as the corpse of the monkey is exposed. J. Bacot pointed out that the monkey, in this context, symbolises the king's ancestor. In my opinion, the deity lDe-bla gung-rgyal is indeed identical with 'O-lde gung-rgyal whose connection with the first Tibetan king will be the focus of later discussion.

At this juncture, it is important to note that no polluted object, whether animate or inanimate, should be placed on the upper part of the body, which is seen as the seat of the deities who are born at the same time as a given person.

The following legend, concerning the Bonpo master gShen-rab Mi-bo, equally illustrates the notion of impurity. In his childhood, as he was playing in a park, his eternal rival, the demon Khyab-pa lag-ring, created lightning containing the nine impurities. The demon said to himself: "If he does not die, he will surely be polluted", whereupon he struck gShen-rab on the head with the lightning. But thanks to his supernatural wisdom, the latter succeeded in transforming the nine impurities into the 'quintessence of fortune' (*g.yang*) of nine weapons which he then turned against the demon. According to tradition, the nine types of impurity are thus liable to pollute man:[13]

1. Homicide/fratricide (*dme*)
2. The birth of a child just after the death of his father (*mug*)
3. Incest (*nal*)
4. Filthiness (*btsog*)
5. Imprecations (*than*)
6. Inauspicious signs (*ltas ngan*)

11. *PT* 1287 (Bacot *et al*, 1940: 98): *lo ngam gyis mchan nas spre'u phung (phyung) bas/*
12. The king leads a monkey and a cat (*DChB*, p.245); the dead body of a fox and that of a *dog* (*KhG*, f.7b,1); the dead bodies of a fox and a cat (*YJChB*, p. 42); a monkey and a cat, *LShDz* (Karmay, 1972: 67).
13. *ZJ*, Vol. II, chapter 5, f.69.



7. Possession by the *byur* spirit
8. Impurity due to the death of a spouse (*yug*)
9. Pollution of the hearth (*thab mkhon*)[14]

The *bsang* ritual in itself is not considered sufficient to remove the effect of all these impurities. Other rituals of the same kind known as *sel*, 'purifying elimination' are thus required.[15] Like the 'purification of Ge-khod', they must be executed by a specialist on specific occasions, when one of the nine impurities is said to be the cause of the pollution.

**The concept of ritual purification**

This concept is related to the origin myth of gNya'-khri btsan-po, the mythical founder of the Tibetan royal dynasty. This myth has undergone important secular developments and various interpretations have emerged as a result of political and religious manipulation. I will not deal with the myth in detail here as I have already treated it elsewehere.[16] I will only present the part most obviously relating to the purification ritual. According to one version, when the king descends from heaven, he is accompanied by, among others, three ritual experts, each of whom is assigned a specific task. The father of the future king gives the following orders:

"The king of heaven will descend on earth,
As the land of men is impure and polluted,
You Ya-ngal, go before him.
As there will be many unforeseen obstacles,
You, mTshe-mi, guard him on the right.
As this is a land where the gods and demons are fierce,
You, gCo-mi guard him on the left.
You, Ya-ngal, perform the *sel* and the *bsang* rituals in front (to purify his path).
You, mTshe-mi, perform the ritual of 'empowerment' and that of the 'empowerment of physical splendour' (so that the gods and demons on earth do not harm him).
You, gCo-mi, perform the 'ransom' ritual for his body (so that the soul of his body does not stray)..."[17]

14. The passage of *ZJ* in which these nine impure things are given is very incoherent concerning the number and the terms that designate them. In another passage of the same work, they are again enumerated, but this time with less confusion. In one version of the list the term *thab mkhon* is given as one thing and in another as two (*cf.*Snellgrove, 1967, p.46, ll.33-35).
15. *ZJ* (Snellgrove, 1967: 44-49).
16. Article No.18.
17. *gnam lha dog la bshags(gshegs) pa na/ mi yul rtsog(btsog) dang gnol(mnol) che bas/ ya ngal shog gis sna drongs shig/ bar chod hur ba grangs mang bas/ tshe(mtshe) mi*

This origin myth reflects not only social structure but also religious organisation. The social structure apparent in this myth has already been analysed elsewhere.[18] As for religious organisation, it appears in the passage translated above. It is a well known fact that the concept of a soul forms the basis of early religious systems in many societies. In a previous article, I documented the existence of such a concept in Tibet during the royal period and its prevalence in present-day popular beliefs.[19] Moreover, the soul, together with the turquoise, its emblem, was the object of a cult, which explains the widespread use of this stone in ornaments among populations of Tibetan culture even today. The main purpose of the *glud* ('ransom') ritual is often to recapture or strengthen the soul that has been seized by evil spirits or which has simply strayed away from the body, its natural cover. In my view, this notion played a central role in indigenous rituals of a religious and social character. Indeed, I demonstrated how most indigenous rituals are based on the concept of *glud*; in other words, on the idea of exchange and reciprocity, and not on that of a 'scapegoat' as certain authors have suggested.[20] The myth cited above is also included in a Dunhuang document. In this version, only two of the three experts are mentioned, mTshe and gCo'-u, whose religious status as Bonpo priests is clearly distinguished from the other social categories of the king's entourage. This early manuscript, however, does not indicate the type of ritual they were supposed to perform.[21] The expert Ya-gnal, who performs the *sel* and the *bsang* ritual in the previous version, is not mentioned at all. But I have already pointed out in another article that the mythical accounts of the first king found in the Dunhuang manuscripts are extremely schematic compared to the version presented in another indigenous source.[22]

This myth thus reflects a system of beliefs centered around the sacred nature of the divine king with experts empowered to perform rituals at his side. These rituals form a set of religious practices and representations with social and political implications which, in my opinion, constitutes the foundation of the early indigenous system of beliefs. The fact that the religious experts who are designated as *bon* in the Dunhuang manuscript is highly significant. The same specialists

*sku'i g.yas brten cig/ snang srid lha 'dre ye 'brog rgod/ bco mi sku'i g.yon brten cig/ ya ngal gyis sel dang gsangs(bsang) kyis(gyis) cig (shig)/ mtshe mi(s) dbang dang byin rlabs gyis cig(shig)/ (g)co mi'i(mis) sku glud thar legs (gyis) shig/* (*GB*, MS of Oslo University, f.12a, 5-7).

18. Allen, 1978: 343, 347-51.
19. Article No.19, pp. 318-20.
20. Article No.20, pp.328-29.
21. *PT* 1038 (Lalou, 1953: 275-76; Macdonald, 1971: 251-19; Article No.18, pp. 285-86.
22. Article No.18, pp. 295-303.



appear with the same functions in later sources.[23] The early beliefs are in fact based on two distinct but related theories: that of 'soul of the body ' (*sku bla*),[24] i.e. the soul residing in the body, and that of 'ransom of the body' (*sku glud*).[25] The last expression is often interpreted as the 'image of the body' in certain later Buddhist rituals. In the rituals, the *bla* and *glud* are thus seen as counterparts of the beneficiary. In fact, both concepts are founded on the sacred nature of the king, who is so vulnerable that a number of rites are required for his protection: as I mentioned previously, a purification ritual must be performed prior to the king's arrival on earth, the land of men, which is impure and must therefore be purified. We know that the 'soul of the body' of Tibetan kings was primarily assimilated with mountain spirits (*gnyan*). For this reason, the names of the local deities (*yul lha, gzhi bdag*) were often, and still are, preceded by the term *sku bla*. In the hierarchal organisation of the first king's divine genealogy, the local deity 'O-lde gung-rgyal appears as one of the king's four ancestral brothers. Furthermore, this deity is regarded as the father of all local deities on earth, more numerous than the 'atoms of a mountain',[26] and, more particularly, as the father of the nine great local deities, including the *sku bla* Yar-lha Sham-po, the ancestral local deity of the Tibetan royal dynasty. Geographically, the mountain 'O-lde gung-rgyal lies to the south-east of Lhasa, in the region of 'Ol-kha.

The local deities are particularly important to our analysis of the *bsang* ritual, as they are generally seen as the original ancestors of the local population and thus are the privileged objects of cult in this purificatory ritual. It is quite understandable that they may be angered when their 'human descendants' do not observe the interdictions. The ritual is preferably performed on hills and mountains which are believed to be the dwelling of these deities.

Among the three ritual experts mentioned in the myth, mTshe-mi, the 'man from mTshe', is of particular interest. We know that the word *mtshe* refers to a plant, *Ephedra* sp,[27] which is the subject of a myth pertaining to the *glud* ('ransom') ritual in one of the Dunhuang manuscripts.[28] In this ritual, the plant is offered with other substances as the *glud* ('ransom'). In another fairly ancient source, mTshe-mi performs a ritual in which he places the plant on the future king's head before he descends on earth.[29] Unfortunately, the reasons behind the ritual usage of

23. *DChB*, p.235 ('Tshe-mi); *DJChB*, p. 101; *LShDz*, p. 130.
24. *Cf.* Macdonald, 1971: 354 *et seq.*
25. IOL (Thomas, 1957, p.71, 1.224; ll.289-96; Article No. 20, p. 342).
26. *DChB*, p.230.
27. Meyer, 1981: 178.
28. IOL (Thomas, 1957: 62-65).
29. *JSChB*, p. 101.

this plant still escape me. In the myth presented above, mTshe-mi is the one who must perform the ritual of empowerment, but the *mtshe* plant is not mentioned. The specific purpose of this ritual is to treat injuries that might be inflicted on the king's 'soul of the body' by earthly demons. Thus, when the king's soul leaves its body, the ritual for 'ransom of the body' must be executed so that his soul may preserve its integrity.

It must be noted that the particular use of the terms *dbang* and *byin rlabs* in the description of mTshe-mi's ritual function reflects a later interpretation of their early indigenous connotations, which, under the influence of Buddhism, have undergone considerable changes.

### The annual *bsang* celebration

When the *bsang* ritual is performed annually by the entire community, it takes on a socio-cultural and political character. Participation in the ritual implies moral obligations within the community which it regulates. These aspects of the ritual are in turn essential for understanding the multiple dimensions of the beliefs that underlie it. I will forego a detailed ethnographic description here since it figures in another article.[30]

In Tibet and especially in the bordering regions, the population usually gathers around two main cultural poles: a monastery which serves as an ecclesiastic centre and a mountain believed to be the abode of the local deity who is often regarded as the primary ancestor of the local population. For this reason, the name of the deity is often preceded by the parental designation *a myes*, grandfather, *a pha*, father or by the term *sku bla*. These two centres do not generally reflect a territorial division established by the local administration. Theoretically, the monks are excluded from the annual ceremony performed on the mountain, just as the laymen are excluded from the liturgies held in the monastery.

When, for instance, four villages are organised and gather around two such centres, they form a community which is referred to as *tsho bzhi*, the 'four tribes', and which can be described as a kind of federation. If the community comprises six villages then it is referred to as *tsho drug*, the 'six tribes', and so forth. These political groups are more pronounced in Amdo.[31] Indeed, this type of political and secular organisation is all the more marked in the regions farthest from Central Tibet where it was replaced as a political power by Buddhist religious institutions. In addition to the main mountain deity of the community, each village also has its own local deity who is said to be kin to the principal mountain deity. In my view, this notion of kinship between the local deities reflects the divine genealogy of the first Tibetan king.

30. Article No. 23, pp. 428-31.
31. *Cf.* Karmay, Sagant, *Les neuf forces de l'homme* (in press).



The lay people are the ones who organise the yearly ceremony in which only members of the same communtiy can take part. Participation implies not only communal responsibility toward the federation, but also solidarity in the face of external aggression.

The focal point of the ritual is, of course, the fumigation itself performed at the shoulder of the mountain. The date and duration of the ceremony, as well as the number of participants varies according to the region and size of the community. Generally it lasts two days. On the first day, the participants gather at the foot of the mountain. They camp and spend the night there so as to perform the ritual at dawn the next day (Plate 1). The ceremony transpires as follows:

1. Preparation of the materials required for the *bsang* (*bsang rdzas*) ritual: the ritual arrow (*mda' rgod*), symbol of man, which is prepared several days in advance, juniper branches (*shug pa*), a mixture of roasted cereals (*shel tshig*), pieces of cloth or paper printed with the image of the 'wind horse' (*rlung rta*)[32] and other aromatic shrubs (which I shall discuss below) if they are available. Each person brings his own materials according to his means and capacity.
2. All the materials, except for the ritual arrow and 'wind-horses', are placed in front of the 'cairn' (*la btsas*), in the area where the fire has been prepared.
3. The leader of the community - if he is absent, the eldest man - must begin the ceremony by setting fire to the ritual materials so as to make as much smoke as possible.
4. The arrow and pieces of paper or cloth printed with the 'wind horse' are waved over the fire to 'purify' them.
5. The participants invoke the mountain deity at the top of their voices, all at the same time, whilst they scatter the 'wind horses' to the wind.
6. The arrows are planted in the 'cairn' (*la btsas*) to show that each man entrusts himself to the deity.

The ceremony proper is followed by verbal sparring matches, horse races, shooting contests, dancing and singing. After this the participants return to the camp site and then at the end of the day to the village.

### The liturgical ritual for purification.

While the *bsang* ritual is essentially popular and performed by laymen, the 'purification of Ge-khod' must be accomplished by religious

32. *Cf.* Article No. 22. In *PT* 126 (Macdonald, Imaeda, 1978, Pl.136, ll.140-50), the *sku bla* cult involves having a certain number of ritual items: an arrow (*lha mda'*); grains, sheep (*lha lug*), a horse (*lha rta*), a *'bri* (*lha 'bri*) and a yak (*lha g.yag*).

experts. Both rituals are nevertheless founded in the same beliefs. The liturgical ritual consists in chanting three short and anonymous texts belonging to the ritual cycle devoted to the divinity Ge-khod.[33] To avoid encumbering this article, I will only translate the most important passages showing the essential aspect of the ritual. According to Bonpo tradition, the cycle of Ge-khod originated in Zhang-zhung, a kingdom situated to the west of Central Tibet at the time of the Tibetan empire.

This type of purification ritual is not only performed within the framework of the Ge-khod cycle, but also at the beginning of all rituals belonging to the so-called 'white water' (*chab dkar*) liturgical tradition. Thus, this ritual, which only lasts around twenty minutes, is never practised alone but always as a preface to the main ritual. The purification itself is preceded by another brief ritual destined to 'eliminate the poisons' (*dug phyung*) accumulated through impure activity.[34]

**Text I**

This text is composed of three parts and refers to the 'red *tshan*' (*dmar tshan*)[35] which consists of a mixture of water, medicinal substances and animal blood. I have decided to translate only the passage containing the mythical account of the ritual's origin and the purification of the deity Ge-khod. This passage is particularly significant and appears to be very ancient since its style is in some respects archaic compared to the rest of the text. It is preceded by two lines, written in small characters, concerning the preparation of the ritual materials. This brief instruction is followed by the 'title', in large characters and in the language of Zhang-zhung, which takes up almost two lines. I have not attempted to translate this long title as this language has not yet been sufficiently studied.[36] The second part of this text is an invocation to the deities, while the third deals with the eleven forbidden deeds.[37] These two parts will not be translated here since they basically repeat the contents of the first part and Text III.

33. *GSD*, pp.67-81.
34. *GSD*, pp.63-67. I already have made a summary of this ritual in Article No.8, p. 144.
35. According to Tenzin Namdak the term *tshan* means 'water' (Snellgrove, 1967: 306). This is the usual meaning, but one finds it in conjunction with other terms: *chu tshan*, 'hot water', *tshan chab*, 'lustral water'. It is possible that it originally had the sense of blood (*cf.* Text I, ll.70-85). However, it is also used in the sense of *rtsi*, 'essence', 'secretion', 'crop', (*GSD*, p.98: *spang tshan*, *brag tshan*) or even 'elixir'. The expressions *dmar tshan* and *dkar tshan* should not be confused with *tshan dmar* and *tshan dkar*, names of the herb *sro lo* (*cf.* Text III, l.29) of which there are two kinds: red and white (*cf. DSh*, pp. 312-14; *BG*, under *sro lo*).
36. *GSD*, p.67.
37. *GSD*, pp.71-72.



The following is the list of the eleven forbidden deeds as presented in the third part:

1. To change one's deity (to abandon one for another)
2. To break one's vows
3. To pollute the deities by violating the interdictions
4. To mix one's sweat with that of a *mun nag*[38] woman
5. To sleep with a woman who has committed murder
6. To wear the clothing of a *ya ma can* [39] person
7. To eat food offered by a person who has violated the interdictions
8. To eat horse meat
9. To touch a naked human corpse
10. To abandon one's own '*gnyan* deity' (mountain deity)[40]
11. To offend the 'brave deity'

According to the third part, a summary of which we have just noted, the defilement caused by the transgression of any one of these prohibitions can be cleansed (*bkru*) with the blood of different animals. However, no explanation concerning the relation between these prohibitions and the animals is provided. In the myth of Ge-khod, the deity's hands are washed with the blood of thirteen different animal species, but the latter are not associated with any specific impurity. It seems that this part of the text was the object of overzealous elaboration. Moreover, the second prohibition, which does not refer to any particular interdiction, seems to be a later addition. Indeed, it is not included in Text III where the prohibitions are listed in a different order. It is interesting to note that animal blood, which in Text I 'has the effect of cleansing the pollution' (*mnol thub*) is considered the most sacred of fluids, whereas in many primitive societies this status is reserved for human blood alone.[41]

To eat horse meat is considered morally condemnable since in Tibetan society the horse is not only the companion of man, but also, as illustrated by the 'wind-horse' (*rlung rta*), a symbol of his welfare. It is important to recall that in the myth concerning the conflict between the horse and the yak, man finally takes the side of the horse against the yak.[42] From another point of view, the horse is also considered impure since it is 'mounted' by man, and for this reason one must avoid passing

38. In another text this expression is spelled *mi nag mo*, 'black woman' (*GSD*, p. 107). No text explains, to my knowledge, its real meaning. In Amdo, any married woman is often called *nag mo*.
39. According to *BG*, the term *ya ma* means the diease called *mgo srin*.
40. *GSD*, pp.72-73. For the Tibetan text on these interdictions, see Text III, ll.70-79.
41. *Cf.* Durkheim, 1960: 194-95; 471.
42. IOL (Thomas, 1957: 9-19; Stein, 1971: 485-91).

under its belly. The prohibition concerning contact with a woman who has committed a murder does not seem to reflect a discriminatory attitude against women, since, according to Tibetan tradition, a woman must never take another being's life insofar as she herself produces life.

The prohibition concerning contact with a naked human corpse is effectively observed in Tibetan tradition. In a legend recounting the supposedly historical debate on doctrinal points between the Buddhists and the Bonpo, the latter severely criticise the former for their use in tantric rituals of human bones, human skin (*zhing chen*), entire human corpses, (*bam chen*) and human body secretions. The Bonpo argue that these substances are 'impure' (*mi gtsang ba*), unsuitable for the cult of the local deities of Tibet, who reside in the 'pure abode' (*gtsang ris kyi lha*) and who are therefore liable to be polluted (*grib kyis phog pa*) by the use of such substances from the human body in the rituals.[43] Let us note in passing that their use in Buddhist rituals clearly derives from Indian conceptions and is therefore foreign. Futhermore, insofar as the local deities are considered as the ancestors of the local population, it is easy to understand why offerings of human origin may, in this context, take on anthropophagous connotations. Moreover, in iconography, these deities are always depicted as men and never with fierce animal heads as is generally the case with the gods belonging to the Buddhist pantheon.

Present evidence does not allow me to determine the reasons underlying these prohibitions. It is nevertheless clear that they pertain as much to ethical conduct as to the sacred nature of the deities. They are mythologically connected to the deeds committed by the deities themselves. When man violates these prohibitions, he not only defiles himself but also defiles the deities; that is to say, his ancestors.

**Text II**

This text is devoted to the 'white *tshan*' purification ritual (*dkar tshan*) which requires a mixture of water, milk and medicinal substances. Like the previous text, it begins with instructions, in small characters, concerning the preparation of the ritual materials. I have decided to translate only the passage relating to the mythical origin of the sprinkling of the sacred water.

As for the procedure of the 'red *tshan*' and the 'white *tshan*', the officiants chant the texts while the acolyte, holding a ladle full of water in his left hand, sprinkles all parts of the house with the juniper branch in his right hand.

43. *GB*, f. 55a, ll.1-8 (MS of Oslo University).



**Text III**

It contains the origin myth of the fumigation ritual (*bsang*) proper. I have already translated part of this text in a previous work on the notion of ritual in general.[44] I include the translation of the complete text here so as to give a general idea of the fumigation ritual in its liturgical form. In addition, this text indicates which species of aromatic plants and trees must be used and the reasons for which these plants are believed to purify the pollution. The nine types of plants used are designated as 'purifying trees' (*bsang shing*). Not all are always available, but juniper, often called 'tree of the local deities' (*lha shing*), can generally be found everywhere and is thus most commonly employed. Yet the text does not pay any particular attention to this tree whose smoke, according to popular belief, is supposed to purify pollution even without the liturgical ritual. It is also one of the symbols of the eternity of Bon because its leaves remain green all year round.

The text has also preserved (II.6-7) a number of significant notions peculiar to such early beliefs as 'beholding the face of the deties' (*lha zhal blta ba*) and man as the 'master' or 'owner' of the deities (*lha bdag*). These notions are expressed in the same terms and, likewise, in the context of the *sku bla* cult in two early sources.

In *PT* 126, the Phyva send a messenger to the dMu asking them to send a dMu[45] to be the king of men. But first the messenger asks to see the 'face of the deities" (*lha zhal mthong ba*);[46] in other words, that of the *sku bla* of the dMu. The dMu refuse to take this demand seriously, but finally allow him to worship their *sku bla* on the condition that he supplies the necessary materials, including the arrow and grains, for a cult analogous to that described for the popular *bsang* ritual above.

The notion of a 'master' or 'owner' of the deities is particularly significant. It suggests that man has not always considered himself at the mercy of the supernatural beings but that they once maintained friendly relations based on mutual need. This corroborates the idea that man is a descendant of the gods and that there was a time when men and gods were not separate. This notion can also be traced to fairly ancient times. The same expression *lha bdag* appears in the ninth century inscription in Kong-po. This inscription reports that Prince Nya-khyi, of the Tibetan royal house, worshipped the awesome (*gnyan po*) *sku bla* of the two princely brothers, that is to say, himself and his brother Sha-khyi, and that he 'united' (*bshos*) with a mountain goddess called De-mo, also a *sku bla*, and thereby acquired the ritual function of 'owner of the deities' (*lha*

44. Article No.8, p. 146.
45. The Phyva and dMu are categories of deities in cosmogony, see Article No.17, pp. 250-53.
46. *PT* 126 (Macdonald, Imaeda, 1978, Pl.139, l.139; Pl.136, l.164).

*bdag*).[47] In other words, he looks after the deity by worshipping him. Two Western scholars have already analysed this inscription. Although they disagree on its general interpretation, they agree on the meaning of the expression *lha bdag*. H. Richardson translated it as 'divine master', while Ariane Macdonald translated it as 'lord god'. According to both, the prince himself, in this context, is *lha, the* deity.[48] It is true that Tibetan kings often bore titles comprising the term *lha*, such as *lha btsan po*, and were often designated as *lha* during the imperial period. We know that this appellation stems from the mythical origin of the first king. But in this inscription we are dealing with a religious and mythical ritual in which the *sku bla* are worshipped. Moreover, the prince 'unites' with the goddess and becomes 'owner of the deity'. The prince himself is therefore not the *lha,* but the 'master' or 'owner' of the *lha,* as is also the case in the texts presented here where man is clearly distinguished from the deities as their 'owner' (*lha dang lha bdag*): the *lha* is the *sku bla* Ge-khod and the man worshiping him is his 'owner' (*lha bdag*).

During the liturgical *bsang* ritual, the officiants chant the text, while the acolyte, who burns juniper leaves in a ladle so as to produce as much smoke as possible, fumigates all sections of the house.

**The myth of the deity Ge-khod**

In Text I, part of which is translated below, the mythical account is very schematic and in some places loses its coherence. I will attempt to provide some explanations concerning the myth and a brief analysis of its contents.

The perpetual friction between the gods and demons, symbolising the conflict between good and evil, for and against existence, is ended and a pact is sealed by the marriage between a god and a she-demon. From their union the god Ge-khod and other children are born. But the mother can no longer stand the gods and she returns to the demons leaving her husband and children behind. This defection rekindles the cosmic conflict between gods and demons. The fierce Ge-khod, exhorted by his father, goes to the land of demons and in his rage he strikes out wildly. Among the dead demons, he finds, to his regret, his own mother. He returns with her ring which he gives to his father. But overcome by grief, he swallows the sun and moon, keeping the sun inside the right cheek and the moon inside the left. He then goes to sleep in the depths of a citadel surrounded by nine walls. The world becomes dark and the demons rejoice. In heaven, the gods take counsel. They agree that the person who succeeds in liberating the sun and moon will be awarded the 'insignia of magic power'

47. *sku bla de mo dang bshos pa'i lha bdag bgyis kyis kyang/* (Richardson, 1985, p.66, ll.6-7).
48. Richardson, 1985: 67; Macdonald, 1971: 298.



(*mthu dbang yig tshang*). Ku-byi mang-ke, who is as tiny as a spindle stands up and claims he will succeed. He rides off on a spider, carrying a ladle full of molten bronze. He manages to pour the liquid into Ge-khod's ear, but is so afraid that he flees. Ge-khod, by now awakened, sees that the spider, in its haste, has thrown Ku-byi to the ground. This makes the giant laugh. The sun and the moon escape from his open mouth and the world becomes light again. In order to purify the pollution caused by the matricide, Ku-byi makes Ge-khod wash his hands with the blood of thirteen animals. Ku-byi receives the insignia of 'magic power' for his brave deed.

In this text, the term *mnol* 'pollution' is used rather than *dme* 'murder'. The blood of the thirteen animals is designated as 'that which eliminates the pollution' (*mnol thub*). It must be noted that it does not refer to a bloody sacrifice as one might have expected. The text provides no explanation as to why the blood of these thirteen animals is supposed to eliminate the pollution. The third part of the text states that the violation of the prohibitions can be purified by the blood of different animal species, but provides no further indication. In any event, no animal is killed for these rituals.

The nucleus of the story is evidently the murder, further dramatised by the fact that the victim is a kinswoman. The story's structure involves a number of contrasting elements. A giant, powerful but dim-witted god and a tiny, weak but highly intelligent god are the key figures in this cosmic conflict. A period of peace and happiness, characterised by harmony and purity achieved through family unity, ends with a new tragedy marked by the rupture of this unity, followed by a murder which revives the conflict. The pollution not only affects the society of which the family is part but the whole world. Finally light, the symbol of purity, dispels darkness which symbolises impurity, thus marking the victory of the gods over the demons, of good over evil. The victory is consolidated by the purification ritual of Ge-khod.

Ge-khod, originally a deity associated with Mount Ti-se (Kailash), became a tantric deity and the object of worship in a ritual cycle in later Bonpo tradition. His consort, Mu-la tsa-med, resides in lake Mu-le-had,[49] near lake Ma-pang (Manasarowar), at the foot of mount Ti-se. From Ge-khod emanate three hundred and sixty deities who form his entourage, a figure which G. Tucci associates with the three hundred and sixty days of the lunar year in astrology.[50] In the Bonpo pantheon, Ku-byi, the smallest among gods, is often identified as the deity of wisdom. He is described as having a body similar to a spindle and eyes to that of a needle. In the early documents, his name appears under different variants,

49. Usually called Lag-ngar mtsho.
50. Tucci, 1949: 24.

notably Ku-spyi ser-bzhis, mentioned in a Dunhuang document,[51] in one of the three versions concerning the first Tibetan king's ancestry. In another manuscript, he is associated with 'O-lde gung-rgyal.[52]

The ritual cycle of Ge-khod in Bonpo tradition clearly demonstrates the transformation of indigenous deities, primitively associated with mountains, into Buddhist-like deities. It shows the importance of the mountain cult in its surviving form not only in lay and popular beliefs, but also in liturgical tradition. Three features distinguish the Ge-khod cycle from other similar rituals: its initial connection with the land of Zhang-zhung, whose centre is Mount Ti-se; its main deity who is associated with a mountain (Ti-se); and his transformation into a deity of tantric appearence.

### The liturgical ritual *mnol bsang* in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

*LhNg* is a good example of this type of ritual which is not commonly practised among the Buddhists. It is a short anonymous text similar to Text III of the Bonpo tradition since it also concentrates on the ritual for the 'purification of pollution' (*mnol bsang*). Their resemblance ends here, however. The origin myth of this ritual refers to the activities of the legendary Indian master Padmasambhava as is often the case in Buddhist tradition:[53] whilst the Master was meditating in a cave at bSam-yas, the emperor Khri Srong-lde-btsan (742-797) fell ill and the country was beset with epidemics, hail and drought. The physicians, failing to diagnose the emperor's illness finally suggest that 'pollution' (*mnol grib*) is the cause and that the local deities are thus 'agitated' (*'khrugs pa*). Eventually, the people discover that Mong-bza' Khri-lcam, one of the emperor's wives, had given birth to a son of an unknown father referred to as a 'polluted boy' (*rtsog mnol gyi bu*). The child is held accountable for the country's misfortunes. The emperor recovers after Padmasambhava performs the purification ritual (*mnol bsang*) at the summit of the Has-po-ri hill at bSam-yas.

It is clear that the Buddhist author arranged this myth to suit his Buddhist adaptation of the indigenous purification rite. In addition, he makes use of an anachronism since the Tibetan queen to whom he refers is in fact the Tibetan wife of Srong-btsan sgam-po (who died in 649). She is the only one to have born him a son, known as Gung-srong gung-btsan, who never ruled and who supposedly died before his father.[54] This

51. *PT* 1038 (Lalou, 1953; Macdonald, 1971: 219; Article No.18, p. 286.
52. *lha khu yug mang skyes* (*DChB*, p.230).
53. *Cf.* Article No.19, p. 322.
54. Bacot *et al*, 1940: 88.



genre of 'historical' legend set in the imperial period is quite common in Buddhist rituals adapted to indigenous beliefs.

Tibetan Buddhists have other types of 'purification rituals' (*khrus*, *byol khrus*), but they are based on a radically different concept. They always rely upon a specific deity for purification and the aim of the ritual is to obtain his blessing. Unlike the deities[55] in the two rituals under consideration here, they are invulnerable to the pollution caused by man. The Buddhist rituals generally aim at 'purifying' the 'pollution caused by emotions' (*kleśa, nyon sgrib*) and 'sin' (*pāpa, sdig pa*) in the Buddhist philosophical sense of these terms. This type of ritual is nevertheless performed by the monks as a religious service for the benefit of the faithful. I will not examine these Buddhist rites in further detail here since I am primarily concerned with the indigenous rite.

### Translation of Text I

The red *tshan* for the purification of Ge-khod (p. 67)

If I, the officiant born in the lineage,
Invoke the gods,
I sing the origin myth.
May the 'brave deity'[56] be spared from pollution.
If the pollution lingers too long,
the ranks of gods will be invaded by demons.
They will also conquer the world of men.
The demons will raise their heads high.(p.68)
Long ago, where was Ge-khod polluted?
He, the subjugator of demons
became an eagle.
Then he ruled over the three worlds.[57]
He became a mighty lion
endowed with the three skills.
He became a fearless tiger
with a striped body.
He became a wild yak
with sharp[58] glittering horns.
He ruled over the demons' realm,

55. rDo-rje rnam-'joms (Vajravidāraṇā), to cite just one example.
56. *lha rgod*, literally 'wild deity', but the word *rgod* often has the sense of brave and splendid particularly in Amdo dialects, for example, *bu rgod*, the 'fine brave man'. I have therefore used the word brave since its old use has the same meaning.
57. The 'three worlds' here are, in my view, like the *srid gsum*, i.e. *sa 'og*, underground, *sa steng*, on earth and *sa bla*, above the earth, see *ZJ* (Snellgrove, 1967: 311) and not the *trāidhātu* in Buddhist cosmogony.
58. The term *dbal* designates a category of divinities and also something that is sharp and pointed, *Cf.* Snellgrove, 1967: 304.

He vanquished the land of *srin*
and destroyed the kingdom of *gdon*.
He never disobeyed his father.
But g.Yu-sman, his mother, the demon lady,
loved the demons.
She returned to her own dark kingdom.
Ge-khod was still small and thin.
She abandoned her husband for another.
So Ge-khod, who could no longer bear his father's words,
And no longer received food from his mother,
set off to conquer the world of demons.
He killed g.Yu-sman, the demon lady.
He returned with the left (hand's) ring,
and the silver ring.
He gave them to his father as a sign (of respect)
The father was satisfied.
He awarded him the insignia of courage.
The father and son lived together.
And the gods were thus polluted by the murder.[59]
Ge-khod, subduer of demons, stole the sun and moon.
He put them in his mouth,
one in his right cheek and the other in his left cheek.
He lay down in a house totally dark as though it were surrounded by nine (walls).
The land of gods was engulfed in darkness,
The world of gods was polluted and so was that of the gSas.[60] (p.69)
Ge-khod slept for nights and months, and still did not wake.
He slept for months and years, and still did not wake.
The demons were about to destroy the world of gods.
Darkness prevailed over the world.
The gods took counsel.
They proclaimed that he who succeeded in purifying the pollution of Ge-khod
would be awarded the 'insignia of magic power'.
No one dared come forth.
But Ku-byi mang-ke said:
"I will be able to do it!"

59. The sense of the word *khrom* in the line is unkown to me. It therefore remains untranslated.

60. The *lha* and *gsas* are different types of divinities, the Dunhuang manuscript IOL (Thomas, 1957, p.62, l.58): *lha dgu gsas dgu*; *PT* 1194 (Macdonald, Imaeda, 1979: Pl.480, ll.45): *lha dang gsas*. *Cf.* also Article No.24.



Clad in a weasel coat,
wearing a golden hat
and a golden garment,
he set off mounted on a spider,
with a web as reins
and holding a ladle full of molten bronze,
He poured it into one of Ge-khod's ears.
Awakened, Ge-khod raised his head.
This made the spider jump with fright.
Ku-byi fell to the ground and fainted.
A smile spread across Ge-khod's face.
The sun and moon thus escaped from his cheeks.
The sun and moon began to shine and darkness was dispelled.
As Ge-khod awakened, the world of gods was filled with light.
Ku-byi said to him:
"How my heart is troubled by the pollution affecting the god!
Let me offer you the *tshan* to purify you."
Whereupon he poured into a ladle made from the horn of a wild yak,
the thirteen types of blood, immune against pollution (p.70):
the blood of a horse,
that of the crystal goat,
that of the unicorn rhinoceros,
that of the iron-headed pig,
that of the brown ox,
that of the white vulture,
that of the wild yak,
that of the snow-leopard,
that of the bear,
that of the reindeer[61] and the elk,[62]
that of the blue falcon.[63]
With the blood of these thirteen animals,
the polluted hands of Ge-khod were cleansed.
He was purified from the evil effect of his matricide.
As *tshan* was offered in this world,
Ge-khod was purified, so are (all) the 'brave gods'.[64]

61. The identification is uncertain, because according to *PS*, f.37 the *rngas* 'looks like a deer with a long tail' (*sha 'dra rnga ring*).

62. This idenfication remains provisional.

63. *GBN*, p.129: *ye tse khra sngon mo*.

64. Here as in following two lines the term *tshangs* is used instead of *bsang*, see Text I, ll.89-91.

May all the realms of gods be purified.
May the 'account of matricide' of She-le-tsa[65] be purified
I, the Bonpo born in the lineage,
invoke the deities of my ancestry.
I sing the origin myth
and beat the drum of Existence.
The Bonpo must wear the turban.
His ugly face must be painted red.
May the 'brave god' no longer be polluted!
If pollution prevails,
The ranks of gods wil be invaded by demons.
They will also conquer the land of man.
The demons will raise their heads up high.
I will subdue the *gdon*[66] above,
As well as the *gdon* below,
And wherever they may be found. (p.71)
I will conquer the demons and our foes,
as well as the *the'u rang* and *rgyal bsen*.
May the 'brave god' be spared from pollution.
May he sustain my body,
and illuminate my speech.
May he strenghten my spirit.
May he dress me in a solid coat of mail.
May he provide me with sharp weapons!...[67]

### Translation of Text II

The white *tshan* for the purification of Ge-khod (p.74)

bSvo! In the palace of the dBal gods in eternal heaven,
dwells Ge-khod, the god of the dBal.
His body is clear like crystal.
He knows neither torment[68] nor doubt,[69]

65. Name of a personage, evidently the author of the mythical account of Ge-khod's matricide.
66. A category of malignant spirits.
67. Here the text ends with some *mantra* in what supposed to be Zhang-zhung language (*GSD*, p.71, l.2).
68. The word *nyon mongs* is usually used to translate the Sanskrit term *kleśa*, 'misery', 'suffering' in the Buddhist sense. It also occurs with the sense of 'torment', 'affliction', 'distress' in non-Buddhist texts such as *PT* 1047 (Macdonald, Imaeda, 1978, Pl.346, ll.347-48; Pl.347, l.356).
69. I am aware that the term *rnam rtog* is equivalent of the Sanskrit term *vikalpa*, 'mental discursiveness' in Buddhist philosophical texts. But here it is also used in the sense of 'doubt' and 'hesitation' which are in fact the normal sense of *vikalpa*.



but we, the officiants,
in order to be free of doubt
and to behold the face of Ge-khod,
we offer him the *tshan* purification.
Whence did the *tshan* come?
The lustral water of purification, where does it belong?
From beyond the summit of the three realms,[70]
the mother of ambrosia[71] gNam-phyi gung-rgyal,[72]
clad in a shawl of ambrosia,
clouds of ambrosia gathering over her head,
she holds a vase filled with ambrosia.
From her mouth rains ambrosia.
Her function is to spread ambrosia.
She feeds on the essence of ambrosia.
She drinks the juice of ambrosia.
In order to relieve the torments of suffering beings,
to heal their afflictions
and to bring together the deity and his 'human owner',
she sprinkled a mouthful of ambrosial spittle on the earth,
praying: "May this be medicinal ambrosia.
In the world of the four continents, the land of men,
may the medicinal fruit and plants grow,
so that those who suffer from illness may be cured!"
And she spread the ambrosia over the earth.
So then the substances for the *tshan* appeared.
It is called *tshan* because it falls (like rain),
it is called 'medicine' because it cures disease,
It is called 'ablution' for it washes away the pollution caused by murder.
It is called *tshan* for it purifies pollution.
Camphor,[73] medicine of the snows,
cuttle bone,[74] medicine of the water,
yellow saffron,[75] medicine of the meadows
white *cong zhi*,[76] medicine of the stones,
brown bitumen, medicine of the rocks
brown musk, medicine of the forests,[77]

70. See note 57.
71. *bdud rtsi* normally translates the term *amṛita*, 'ambrosia'. But here it is applied to herbs, plants and trees that are belived to have purifying effects.
72. A goddess having various functions in the Bonpo pantheon and in popular literature such as the Gesar epic.
73. *Cinnamomum camphora* (Meyer, 1981: 173). It is on account of its colour that the snow here is taken as its metaphor.
74. Meyer, 1981: 174: 'os de seiche'.
75. This is probably *Carthamus tinctorius* (Meyer, 1981: 174).
76. The carbonate concretion of lime (Meyer, 1981: 174).
77. This is evidently on account of forests where the animal often lives.

*bezoard*,[78] medicine of the elephant,
medicine of the snows of Mount Ti-se,
and the water of lake Ma-pang,
were mixed together to make the medicinal ambrosia,
that was poured into a silver ladle,
for the *tshan* itself has no tongue[79]
and no horse.[80]
The pure bird of the gods,
covered in medicine,
Gong-mo, the white snowcock, bird of medicine,
Its feathers covered with red designs,
wearing a shawl of madder,
the upper part of its body is the colour of azure blue,
the lower part is the colour of slate,
a golden chisel for its beak,
it wears boots of copper.
It sings the sweet melody of the Pi-vang.[81]
It flies amid the mountain peaks,
over the meadows and the glaciers.
It digs in the ambrosia marshes,
its incantations separate the ambrosia from the poison.
It chants incantations against the poison.
May the poison be defeated,
may it be expelled and (the world) illuminated.[82]
When the snowcock sings *dug chom*, 'destroy the poison',
and *dug thub*, 'conquer the poison', it is its divine incantation.
When it sings *tshangs tshangs*, 'cleanse',
it offers the purification to the gods.
The right wing of the snowcock
is used as a 'tongue' to spread the *tshan*.
May the impurity be eliminated and the pollution purified!
To the god Ge-khod, the great dBal, ancestral deity,[83]
I offer the ablution of *tshan*.[84]

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78. Meyer, 1981: 174.
79. This is an allusion to the goddess who sprinkles her spittle on the earth, see above.
80. This alludes to the wind which carries the spittle of the goddess on the earth, see above.
81. A kind of Tibetan lute.
82. *sa le* = *gsal*, 'clear' (*GNB*, p.140).
83. I have taken the term *yab lha* as a contraction of *yab myes kyi lha*, but it can also be connected with *ya bla* which often euphonically becomes *yab bla* (*cf.* Article No.17, n.25).
84. The text still continues giving a number of names of divinities. Each line containing a name of divinty is followed by the line: *bdud rtsi tshan gyi sku khrus gsol/* I have



## Translation of Text III

The purification of Ge-khod's pollution (p78)

bSvo! In the palace of the dBal gods
Dwells Ge-khod, god of the dBal,
his body is clear like fire.
He knows neither hunger nor pain.
But we, the officiants,
in order to behold the face of Ge-khod
and to bring together the deity and his 'human owner',
we offer the *bsang* purification to Ge-khod. (p.79)
May the 'brave god' be purified by the *bsang*;
the substances of *bsang*, whence do they come?
From beyond the summit of the three worlds,
The mother of ambrosia, gNam-phyi gung-rgyal,[85]
Wearing a shawl of ambrosia.
From her mouth rains ambrosia.
She holds a vase of ambrosia,
Her function is to spread ambrosia.
So that pain and suffering may be destroyed and that we may behold the face of Ge-khod,
knitting her brows,
and sprinkling a mouthful of spittle on the earth,
she pronounced the following prayer of truth:
"In the world of four continents, the land of men,
there is much suffering, doubt and pain.
May the tree of purification grow there
and be the remedy against them all!"
She spread (her spittle) from heaven over the earth.
And thus the substances for the *bsang* appeared:
white *a krong*,[86] essence of the snows,
*sro lo*,[87] essence of the slate,
*a ba*,[88] essence of the rocks,
*spra ba*,[89] the white forehead, essence of the meadows,
fragrant *spos me*,[90] essence of the clay,

---

omitted this part of the text for two reasons: to avoid the tedious repetition and the recurrence of its contents in Text III, ll.51-68.

85. The lines 12-24 are repetitions of the lines 11-26 of Text II.
86. Designates different species of the plants: *Arenaria*, *Tanacetum* and *Thamnolia* growing in places of high altitude and still used in the *bsang* ritual (Meyer, 1981: 181).
87. Designates different varieties of *Arenaria*, see note 35.
88. *Carex* sp. (Meyer, 1981: 181).
89. *Gerbera* sp. (Meyer, 1981: 176. Here this herb is called *spra ba'i tho gu*).
90. Not identified. *PS* (f.77) gives *rdza spos* as its synonym.

artemis[91] with gold leaves, essence of the cliffs,
juniper, essence of the sunny side,
white rhododendron, essence of the shady side,
brown sandalwood, essence of the forests,
the officiant from the Zhang-zhung world,
collected these substances for the *bsang* (ritual),
and burnt them in a fire, the 'weapon which destroys poison'
and emits sparkles like lightning, (p.80)
to discourage pernicious enemies.
The flame spread throughout space,
illuminating the darkness caused by torment and doubt.
The coal from the sparks fell on earth,
forming the wealth of gods and men.
The ashes, white powder, dispersed by the wind,
destroyed the enemies.
The smoke that rose in a cloud to heaven,
was inhaled by the gods,
and thus eliminated the impurity and purified the pollution.
May Ge-khod, the great dBal, ancestral deity, be purified!
May his wife Mu-la tsa-med, be purified!
May dKyel-chen phu-ver, the warrior god, be purified!
May Ku-byi mang-ke, (god of) magic action, be purified!
May the mother, Tshang-stang rgyal-mo, be purified!
May Ting-nam rgyal-mo, the sister, be purified!
May Li-mun rgyal-mo, the sister, be purified!
May Ne-slas 'phrul-gyi rgyal-mo be purified![92]
May the four ahtletic boys[93] be purified!
May the three hundred and sixty emanations of Ge-khod be purified!
May the gods of the family ancestors be purified!
May the solemn gods of the masters be purified!
May Ti-se, the white mountain of the soul, be purified!
May Ma-pang, the blue lake of the soul, be purified!
May the protecting deity of me, the priest, be purified!
May the god who protects the young be purified![94]

91. *Artemisia* sp. (Meyer, 1981: 173).

92. These are the goddesses of the four elements in Bonpo rituals. The names contain Zhang-zhung words: *tshang stang* = *me*, fire (*PS*, f.98): *ting* = *chu*, water; *li* = *rlung*, wind; *slas* = *sa*, earth (*cf. NG*, p.9; Haarh, 1968). The terms *yum*, *sring* and *lcam* are here of rather polite address. They do not imply real parental connections.

93. These four athletes, the four goddesses (note 92) and others constitute the host of divinities in the *mandala* of Ge-khod (*GSD*, pp.169-79).

94. A particular deity of the ritual devoted to the protection of children against the *sri* spirits who attack them.



May the god residing on our shoulder who allows us to see (the future) be purified!
May the local deity of wherever we dwell be purified!
May the god of the judgewho presides over the trial[95] be purified! (p.81)
If we, the priests, who invoke (these gods)
have eaten horse meat,
or touched a naked human corpse,
or comitted an action against the 'brave deity',
or exchanged our own deity, the 'brave' *gnyan*, for another,
or broken our vows,
or abandoned our tutelary deity for another,
or mixed our sweat with that of *mun nag mo* woman,
or shared bed with a woman who has committed murder,
or worn the clothing of a person suffering from the *ya ma* disease,
or eaten the food offered by those who have violated these interdicts,
do not rejoice, you, the 'brave god'.
First we confess these transgressions from the depths of our hearts,
and express our repentence,
and finally we purify you with these pure essences!..[96]

## Conclusion

The concept of purification reveals itself as one of the primary elements that consitute the basis of Tibetan culture. Even though it has undergone much change with different interpretations for centuries, it remains basically fundamental. The notion, as expressed in the popular *bsang* ritual, not only implies the belief in the local deities connected with the myth of the first king, founder of the Tibetan royal dynasty, but continues to play a prominent role in the social and political cohesion of present-day society. In its liturgical version, it bears witness to the development, in Bonpo tradition, of certain 'tantric' rituals whose main divinity is a local mountain deity. We also noted that in order to maintain harmony between the local deities and men, a variety of interdictions were required, some of which are still observed today, even though they have lost their ritual significance. Moreover, in the liturgical tradition, man is referred to as 'owner of the deity' something that brings to mind the notion already attested to in Tibet in the ninth century. Finally, the *sku bla* or local deities, are still, as during the imperial period, the object of a

95. The term *za kha* seems to have the same meaning as *gyod kha*, 'trial', 'dispute', 'quarrel'.

96. Here the text ends with some *mantra* words in Zhang-zhung language and followed by the title of the text itself which I have translated at the beginning.

cult in both popular and liturgical traditions. Its continuity in present-day rituals demonstrates that the cult has remained basically unchanged and that there is no real break between its early practice and later tradition.

## Transliteration of the Tibetan texts

### Text I

Ge khod lo phrom e'i dmar tshan (*GSD*, p.67,l.5)

bdag brgyud du skyes pa'i bon po yis/
rigs kyi lha bdar na/
khungs kyi smrang gyer ro/
lha rgod ma gnol cig (zhig)/
mnol ba yun ring na/
lha dral (gral) srin gyis 'phrog/
mi yul bdud kyis bcom/
'dre srin mgo lo rgod/ (p.68)
sngon lha rgod mnol ba gar srid na/
lha rgod bdud 'dul de/
sprul ba khyung du sprul/
khams gsum zil gyis mnan/
rtsal chen seng ger sprul/
rtsal gsum lus la rdzogs/
dpa' rngam stag tu sprul/
ris bkra shul du tshang/
khong mo 'brong du sprul/
ru zer dbal du 'phro/
bdud khams dbang du bsdus/
srin khams cham la phab (phabs)/
gdon khams rdul du brlag (brlags)/
yab kyi bka' ma bcag/
bdud bza' g.yu sman mas/
bdud la dang sems byas/
bdud yul nag por song/
sras bu chung la skam/
stang po gzhan la bor/
pha ngag bus ma theg/
yum du zhal ma 'tsho/
bdud dkhams cham la phab (phabs)/
bdud bza' g.yu sman bsad/
srin lag g.yon pa dang/
dngul dkar sor gdub gnyis/
yab la rtags su phul/
yab kyis yum la snying tshims bdar/



sras la dpa' rtags bskon/
sras dang yab tu 'tsho/
lha la dme dang khrom (phrom) shor ro/
bdud 'dul ge khod kyis/
nyi zla zung cig brkus/
mkhur khug g.yas dang g.yon du bcug/
mun khang dgu rim nang du nyal/
lha yi yul du mun nag 'thib ('thibs)/
lha khams mnol la gsas khams sme/(p.69)
zhag mnal zlar ma sad/
zla mnal lor ma sad/
lha khams bdud kyis brlag la khad/
'jig rten khams na mun pa 'thib ('thibs)(/
der lha khams mang po mdun ('dun) ma 'dus/
ge khod mnal (mnol) bsang sus nus la/
mthu dbang yig tshang sbyin no skad/
ge khod mnal (mnol) bsang nus ma mchis/
ku byi mang ke zhal na re/
ge khod mnal (mnol) bsang ngas nus skad/
sre mong va lcam slag pa gyon/
gser gyi zhva chung klad la gyon/
gser gyi slag pa sku la gsol/
skyin bu kha bre rta ru zhon/
ba dag (thag) skyin thag srab kyis srab/
khro chu khol ma ko ro gang/
bdud 'dul ge khod rna bar blugs/
ge khod sad pas dbu yar bteg/
skyin bu kha bre dred kyis 'drog/
ku byi mang ke brdab cing brgyal/
ge khod zhal nas rgod cig shor/
nyi zla mkhur khug g.yas dang g.yon nas shor/
nyi zla shar bas mun pa dangs/
ge khod sad pas lha khams dangs/
ku byi mang ke'i zhal na re/
lha la mnol shor snying re na/
lha la mnol bsang tshan gsol 'tshal/
der khong mo 'brong gi ru skyogs su/
mnol thub khrag sna bcu gsum blugs/ (p.70)
mnol thub gyi ling rta yi khag/
mnol thub shel gyi ra skyes khrag/
mnol thub bse'u ru gcig khrag/
mnol thub dur phag lcags mgo'i khrag/
mnol thub ban glang smug po'i khrag/
mnol thub bya rgod dkar mo'i khrag/

mnol thub khong mo 'brong gi khrag/
mnol thub gangs g.yi dkar mo'i khrag/
mnol thub dom dred khrag dang 'khris/
mnol thub rngas dang kha sha'i khrag/
mnol thub ye tse sngon mo'i khrag/
mnol thub khrag sna bcu gsum gyis/
ge khod dme lag de la bkrus/
ma bsad sdig dang rnam smin dag/
'jig rten khams na tshan gsol bas/
ge khod bsang bas lha rgod tshangs/
lha khams thams cad tshangs gyur cig/
she le tsa yi dme bshad tshangs/
bdag brgyud du skyes pa'i bon po yin/
rigs kyi lha bdar ro/
khungs kyi smrang gyer ro/
srid pa'i rnga brdung ngo/
bon chung thod kyis bstod/
bzhin ngan mtshal gyis byug/
lha rgod ma mnol cig (zhig) /
mnol ba yun ring na/
lha dral (gral) srin gyis 'phrog/
mi yul bdud gyis bcom ('joms)/
'dre srin mgo lo rgod/
bdag yas gdon 'dul du chas/
mas gdon 'dul du chas/
srin can 'dul du chas/ (p.71)
bdud dang mu stegs 'dul du chas/
the'u rang rgyal bsen 'dul du chas/
lha rgod ma mnol cig (zhig) /
bdag la dbang bskur cig (zhig)/
gsung la byin phab cig/
sems la ngar thob cig (zhig)/
sra ba'i go gyon cig (zhig) /
rno ba'i mtshon thogs shig/ ...

**Text II**

Ge khod bsang ba'i dkar tshan/ (*GSD*, p.74, 1.4)

bsvo nam mkha' mi 'gyur dbal gyi gzhal yas na/
dbal lha ge khod skur bzhugs pa/
dbal sku shel ltar gsal ba la/
nyon mongs rnam rtog mi mnga' ste/
bdag cag gshen gyer sgrub pa pos/
lus kyi rnam rtog bsal ba dang/



ge khod lha zhal blta ba'i phyir/
ge khod lha la tshan khrus gsol/
tshan gyi rgyu 'di gang nas byung/
khrus kyi chab 'di gang nas (la) gtogs/
srid gsum 'dus pa'i rtse mo yang gong na/(p.75)
gnam phyi gung rgyal bdud rtsi'i yum/
sku la bdud rtsi'i thul ba gsol/
dbu la bdud rtsi'i sprin dpung gtibs/
phyag na bdud rtsi'i bum pa bsnams/
zhal nas bdud rtsi'i char ba 'bebs/
las su bdud rtsi'i thang ma brdal/
zas su bdud rtsi'i snying po bza'/
skom du bdud rtsi'i khu ba 'thung/
sems can nyon mongs sdug bsngal can/
nyon mongs nad rnams gso ba dang/
lha dang lha bdag mjal ba'i phyir/
zhal gyi mchil ma ljags gang la/
bdud rtsi sman du smon lam btab (btabs)/
mi yul gling bzhi'i 'jig rten na/
sdug bsngal nad sel rtsi dang sman/
sems can don du 'khrungs bar smon/
sa gzhi'i khams su gtor ba la/
de la tshan gyi rgyu ru srid/
tshan du babs pas tshan zhes bya/
nad rnams gso bas sman zhes bya/
sme ba dag pas khrus zhes bya/
mnol ba bsang bas tshan zhes bya/
bdud rtsi ga bur gangs kyi sman/
rgya mtsho sbu ba chu yi sman/
gur gum ser po spang gi sman/
cong zhi dkar po rdo yi sman/
brag zhun smug po brag gi sman/
mchong gi gla ba nags skyi sman/
gi vam glang po che yi sman/
ti se gangs (p.76) kyi sman/
ma pang mtsho yi chu/
bdud rtsi sman du sbyor/
dngul skyogs nang du blugs/
tshan la ljags ma mchis/
khrus kyi rta ma mchis/
rnam dag lha yi bya/
dvangs ma sman gyis bskor/
sman bya gong mo de/

mtshal gyi spu ris can/
gtsos (btsod) kyi la'u can/
mthing gi stod skor la/
g.ya' sham g.ya' mas bskor/
gser gyi gzong bu'i mchu/
zangs kyi lham (lhvam) bu gyon/
gsung snyan pi vang glu/
ri rgyal rtse la 'grim/
g.ya' spang gangs la chags/
bdud rtsi'i khron la brko/
rtsi dug sngags kyis 'byed/
zhal nas dug sngags bzlo/
dug chom dug thub tshangs gyur cig/
dug thub dug phyung sa le mo/
gong mos dug bcom zer ba dang (de)/
dug thub lha sngags zlo ba yin/
gong mos tshang tshang zer ba de/
lha la dag tshangs gsol ba yin/
sman bya gong mo'i gshog ru g.yas pa la/
bdud rtsi tshan gyi ljags su byas/
sme ba dag la mnol ba tshangs/
yab lha dbal chen ge khod la/
bdud rtsi tshan gyis sku khrus gsol/....

**Text III**

Ge khod mnol bsang/ (*GSD*, p.78, 1.5)

bsvo nam mkha' mi 'gyur dbal gyi gzhal yas na/
dbal lha ge khod skur bzhugs pa/
dbal sku me ltar 'bar ba la/
nyon mongs sbrib skyems mi mnga' ste/
bdag cag gshen gyer sgrub pa pos/
ge khod lha zhal blta ba dang/
lha dang lha bdag mjal ba'i phyir/
ge khod lha la bsang gdab bo/
bsang bas (p.79) lha rgod tshangs gyur cig/
bsang gi rgyu 'di gang nas byung/
srid gsum 'dus pa'i rtse mo yang gong na/
gnam phyi gung rgyal bdud rtsi'i yum/
sku la bdud rtsi'i thul ba gsol/
zhal nas bdud rtsi'i char ba 'bebs/
phyag na bdud rtsi'i bum pa bsnams/
las su bdud rtsi'i thang ma brdal/
nyon mongs sdug bsngal 'joms pa dang/



ge khod lha zhal blta ba'i phyir/
dbu yi smin ma phad phyod la/
zhal gyi mchil ma ljags gang la/
zhal nas bden pa'i smon lam btab/
mi yul gling bzhi'i 'jig rten na/
nyon mongs rnam rtog sdug bsngal mang/
rnam rtog 'joms pa'i rtsi dang sman/
lha rgod bsang shing skye bar shog/
gnam nas sa la gtor ba la/
de la bsang gi rgyu ru byung/
a krong dkar po gangs kyi rtsi/
bdud rtsi sro lo g.ya' yi rtsi/
bdud rtsi a ba brag gi rtsi/
spra ba thod dkar spang gi rtsi/
spos me dri zhim rdza yi rtsi/
mkhan pa gser lo gad kyi rtsi/
shug pa g.yu lo nyin gyi rtsi/
ba lu dkar po srib kyi rtsi/
tsan dan smug po nags kyi rtsi/
zhang zhung srid pa'i bon po yis/
bdud rtsi bsang shing lo breg nas/
nyon mongs dug mtshon me la bsreg/
me stag drag (p.80) pos thog rgod 'phros/
bdug pa'i dgra bgegs kho thag bcad/
me lce bar snang khams su khyab/
nyon mongs rnam rtog mun pa bsal/
'dag ma sa gzhi'i khams su lhag/
lha dang mi yi longs spyod rgyu/
thal ba dung phye rlung gis gtor/
dgra bgegs thal ba rdul du rlog/
dud pa sprin dpung mkha' la 'khrigs/
lha gsas dbal gyi shangs la thim/
dme ba dag la mnol ba bsang/
bsang ngo yab lha dbal chen ge khod bsang/
lcam mo mu la tsa med bsang/
sgra bla dkyil (dkyel) chen phu ver bsang/
rdzu 'phrul ku byi mang ke bsang/
yum gcig tshang stang rgyal mo bsang/
sring gcig ting nam rgyam mo bsang/
lcam gcig li mun lan brgyad bsang/
ne slas 'phrul gyi rgyal mo bsang/
dpa'o gyad kyi khye'u bzhi bsang/

sprul ba sum brgya drug cu bsang/
pha myes rigs kyi rgyud gsas bsang/
slob dpon gnyan gyi drin gsas bsang/
bla ri gangs dkar ti se bsang/
bla mtsho ma pang g.yu mtsho bsang/
shel gyer bdag gi srung ma bsang/
sri'u gso ba'i lha gsas bsang/
rno mthong ston pa'i 'phrag lha bsang/
gar 'dug yul sa gnyan po bsang/
za kha 'byed pa'i zhal lce bsang/ (p.81)
bdag cag shel gyer sgrub pa pos/
khas rta sha bshul mo zos pa'am/
lag pas mi ro dmar la reg pa'am/
lha rgod thub chod byas pa'am/
gnyan rgod bzhag len byas pa'am/
dam tshig chag nyams shor ba'am/
yi dam spang len byas pa'am/
mun nag mo dang rngul 'dres sam/
dme rag mo dang mal gcig gam/
ya ma can gyi gos gyon nam/
nyams pa can gyi zas zos sam/
de ltar lha rgod mi dgyes pa/
dang po nongs pa sems gyis mthol/
bar du 'gyod pa tshig gis bshags/
tha mar dag pa rtsi yis bsang/......



# The Wind-horse and the Well-being of Man

The first visible sign that a traveller sees from a distance when he approaches a Tibetan settlement whether in Tibet or elsewhere is the so-called 'prayer-flag', *dar lcog* in Tibetan, literally it means the 'cloth (attached to) the pinnacle or turret'. The Tibetan term has no religious connotation and indeed the flag was originally not a religious article as the word 'prayer-flag' suggests. However, it has developed into one as Buddhism came to penetrate all aspects of Tibetan culture. As a result the *dar lcog* can now contain nothing but prayers and *mantra*.

The focus of this paper is the concept of the 'wind-horse prayer-flag', its myth and ritual.

## 1. Problem of the origin of *klung/rlung rta*

The Tibetan word for this is *rlung rta*. There are two ways of spelling of this word: *klung rta* which literally means 'river-horse' or the 'horse of the river' and *rlung rta*, meaning 'wind-horse'. Since the first syllable of both spellings has the same sound, ambiguity concerning its meaning has given rise to a certain amount of confusion. L.A. Waddell has taken the spelling as being a phonetic representation of the Chinese word *lung* meaning 'dragon' and connects it with the Chinese phrase *lung ma*, 'dragon-horse'.[1] If that is so, one wonders why it was not translated by *'brug*, dragon since *ma* is translated by *rta*, horse. It would then be *'brug rta* in Tibetan which would surely prove his finding correct. *Lung ma* is represented by a dragon in Chinese mythology (Plate 38). Such a representation in Tibetan culture is unknown. Paintings of *lung ma* are found in Dunhuang manuscripts[2] and therefore it is of ancient origin. It is the symbol of grandeur according to Waddell. But Waddell is confused by his own spelling of the syllable, which he writes as *lung*, a form that never occurs in Tibetan texts or if it does, would be considered incorrect. However, dragon and horse are indeed both animals which determine the make-up of the *rlung rta* as we shall see. The ambiguity about the spelling is apparent from many texts and the Tibetans themselves have been aware of this as we see in the following remark made by 'Ju Mi-pham(1846-1912) at the beginning of this century. He says: "to write *klung rta* is not beautiful. It should be written as *rlung rta* ", but no

1. Waddell, 1971: 408-418
2. Pelliot chinois 2683. I owe this information to my colleague Kuo Liying.

explanation is given.[3]

While the Tibetan tradition of the *dkar rtsis* astrology comes entirely from India with the appearance of the *Kālacakratantra* in Tibet in 1027 A.D., Tibetan tradition attributes its *nag rtsis* astrology to China and indeed there are indications that certain types of Chinese astrology came to be known there already during the Tibetan imperial period, i.e. from the seventh to the ninth centuries A.D. It is from this astrological tradition that the idea of *rlung rta* developed, for the word *klung rta*, 'river-horse' is one of the four basic elements in Tibetan astrology although the sense in this astrological context is by no means clear. The four elements are:

1. *srog*, 'vital force'
2. *lus*, 'body'
3. *dbang thang*, 'power', 'prosperity'
4. *klung rta*, 'river-horse'[4]

The term *klung rta* is, in my opipion, a transformation of the idea of *lung ma*, 'dragon-horse', because this mythic animal is in Chinese mythology always associated with rivers from which it rises often carrying on its back the eight geomantic figures (*spar kha*) (Plate 38).[5] It is from this mythological sense of *lung ma* that the old Tibetan spelling *klung rta*, the 'river-horse' or the 'horse from the rivers' is derived, but the Tibetans somehow have not accepted the actual form of *lung ma* itself and the dragon element has been left out.



*Plate 38: PC 2683. The Chinese characters read: he tu, lit. "River chart" (spar kha, pa gua). The pagua is carried at the back of Long ma, "dragon horse". Photo. Courtesy of the Biblithèque nationale, Paris*

3. I read this in one of the works of Mi-pham, but have been unable to relocate it for the present.
4. *VK*, chapter 22, f.162a,2 *et seq.*, *Cf.* Cornu, 1990: 95, 103.
5. Diény, 1987: 72, 116-117.



As I mentioned earlier, 'Ju Mi-pham does not give any reasons why the spelling *klung* (river) should be changed into *rlung* (wind). It may be because the ideal horse (*rta mchog*) in Tibetan literature is always associated with the wind because of its speed and it takes several epithets containing the word *rlung*, for example, *rlung gi gshog pa can*, the 'one which has the wind-wing'; *rlung las skyes*, the 'one which is born of the wind'. These epithets are of Indian origin and the ideal horse is one of the seven gems in Buddhist texts and that is why it often carries on its back the three jewels symbolising the three *ratna*. As is often the case, Buddhist hence Indian ideas carry more weight in Tibetan tradition and so the 'wind-horse' seems to have come to prevail, but at the same time to symbolise a mundane notion of the layman rather than a Buddhist religious ideal.

It may be because of these reasons that the spelling *rlung*, the wind, is now generally accepted and is translated by 'wind-horse'. Professor Stein further specifies that the *rlung*, 'wind' here stands for the breath[6] while Professor Snellgrove translates it conceptually as 'well-being'.[7] However, the word is still and often mistakenly taken to mean only the actual flag planted on the roof of a house or on a high place near a village. In fact, it is a symbol of the idea of well-being or good fortune. This idea is clear in such expressions as *rlung rta dar ba*, the 'increase of the *rlung rta*' when things go well with someone; *rlung rta rgud pa*, the 'decline of the *rlung rta*' when the opposite happenes. The colloquial equivalent for this is *lam 'gro* which also means luck.

## 2. The features of the *rlung rta*

The image of the *rlung rta* is usually printed. Its size varies from 6 inches to 2 feet square printed on cotton or paper. If it is printed on paper the size is usually small and the impression can run to thousands of copies. At the end of the *bsang* ritual, they are thrown into the air group by group in a successive action so that they float in the air separately like a multidue of kites. If the *rlung rta* is printed on cotton, it is usually attached to a pole which can have the shape of an arrow or attached to tall trees or any high place. The tissue or paper can be of the colour for the year in which one is born, for example, if one is born in the year fire-horse, the colour of his *rlung rta* should be red.

The principal feature of the *rlung rta* are the horse often with a wishing jewel on its back occupying the centre, an eagle and a dragon in the upper corners and a tiger and a lion in the lower corners (Plate 39). Other animals of mythical origin especially the three victory symbols are

6. Stein, 1981: 180, 195.
7. Snellgrove, 1967: 32, 34; 44,24; 56,36; 88, 21; 257, n.10.

sometimes added to this group (Plate 40), but they are a later innovation and so do not represent an integral part of the *rlung rta* composition. The animals which are found in the four corners are called the 'four great *gnyan*' for a particular reason to which I shall return below. They are also considered as the four divinities of *rlung rta* (*rlung rta'i lha bzhi*) in later texts and it has been suggested that they also represent the four cardinal points,[8] but each of the four animals does not always find itself in the same direction. The *rlung rta* representation may also contain *mantra* and even prayers inscribed in the space between the animal representations, but they are purely a later Buddhist addition, for the original concept of the *rlung rta* bears no relation to Buddhism apart from the elements which we have discussed earlier on.

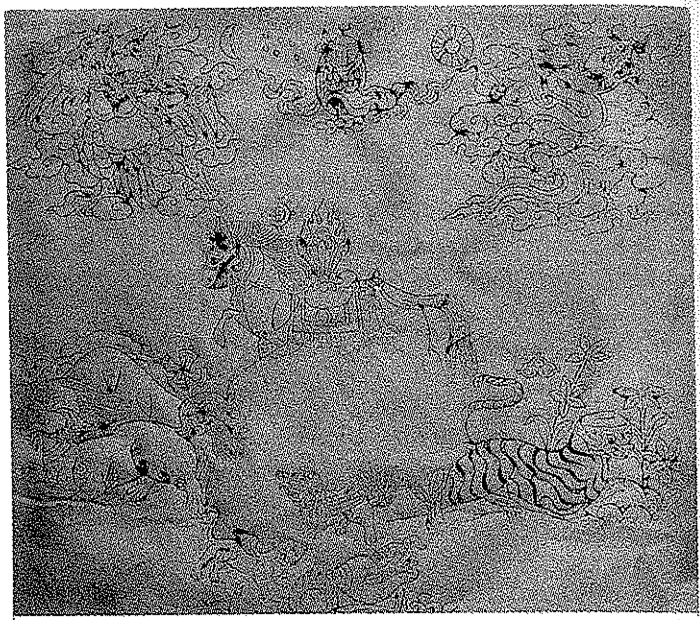


*Plate 39: An ordinary form of rlung-rta*

L. A. Waddell remarks that the form of the *rlung rta* is borrowed from the Aśoka pillars and he says: "the Lamas have degraded much of their Indian symbolism and perverted it to sordid and selfish objects".[9] It is, of course, true that the lamas have made much alteration of the autochthonic symbols to their own ends, but the *rlung rta* symbol as a whole itself has no relation to Indian symbolism.

8. Stein, 1959: 17, n.46
9. Waddell, 1971: 409-10.



### 3. The myth and ritual of the *rlung rta*

The *rlung rta* constitutes an important part of the *bsang* ritual, the fumigation offering of the juniper branches. This is often called *ri bsang rlung rta*, the 'fumigation offering and (the throwing into the wind or planting) of the *rlung rta* high up in the mountains'. The performance of this ritual is recommended prior to whenever there is an important undertaking. It is primarily a secular ritual. During the performance, which requires no presence of any special officiant whether public or private, the layman usually entreats the mountain divinity to help him "increase his fortune like the galloping of a horse and expand his prosperity like the boiling over of milk" (*rlung rta rta rgyug rgyug/ kha rje 'o ma 'phyur 'phyur/*).

In many of the popular rituals, the astrological elements have a very important role, for example, the one which is called the 'Ritual of the four Productions'.[10] The purpose of this ritual is to increase and generate the above mentioned four components. Special interest in this ritual is the way in which the 3rd component, power, is treated. Its symbol is a vase with four sides likened to four doors. In the east, it has merit, in the south the gift of oratory, in the west fame and in the north wealth.[11] The 4th component, the *klung rta* in this ritual contains an origin myth,[12] but it is too short to be fully explicit. It is simply stated that Ye-smon rgyal-po and his wife, the primaeval couple who are the creators of the world in the Bonpo cosmogony[13] have, as their offspring, five *klung rta* brothers representing the five astrological elements, *viz.* fire, earth, iron, wood and water. These five *klung rta* brothers are believed to help man to pluck up his courage, to make everybody listen to him, to realise his wishes, to have continuous success in his action, to have athletic strength, prestige, political power, glory, wealth and fame. A detailed study of the mountain cult which is closely connected with the *rlung rta* concept and which begets political power among the Amdo Sharwa people is being published.[14]

There is another ritual known as 'Erecting the pillar of the *rlung rta*'.[15] This ritual is also associated with the astrological tradition, but it contains a special feature, the role played by the notion of the 'heavenly cord' (*dmu thag*). In the myth of the first Tibetan king, gNya'-khri btsan-po, it is the 'heavenly cord' by means of which he descends to earth, and

10. *bsKyed pa bzhi ldan gyi gto chog* (in *gTo chog skor*, Thimphu, 1987) pp.175-193.
11. *BTh*, pp.183-187.
12. *LK*, pp.189-193.
13. On this primaeval couple, see Article No.17, p. 265.
14. Samten Karmay, Philippe Sagant, *Les Neuf Forces de l'Homme* (in press).
15. *Rlung rta'i ka 'dzugs bsod nams dpung bskyed*, Smanrtsis shesrig spendzod, Vol.80, Leh, 1976.

even though the king Dri-gum btsan-po, six generations later, cuts off his 'heavenly cord' accidentally and so puts an end to the capacity of returning to the heavens, the idea of the 'heavenly cord' lives on in popular rituals. It is believed that not only the early kings but also everybody is born with this cord on his head. For example, in the marriage ritual, coloured threads are attached to the heads of the couple to symbolise this 'heavenly cord' which signifies man's divine origin.[16] This particular traditional ceremony of attaching threads is later simply replaced by the ceremonial scarf (*kha btags*). In the ritual of the *rlung rta* under discussion, the 'heavenly cord' is to be attached to the notch of a ritual arrow and then hoisted by holding the top end of the arrow. This ritual gesture seems to have a symbolic significance. It renews the former concord between man and the heavens whereby the early kings went back to heaven.[17]

Now I come back to the question of the origin myth of the four animals which are found in the four corners of the *rlung rta* flag. It must be stated that neither written nor oral explanations exist anywhere for these animal representations except in a manuscript to which we shall come back below. As far as the the horse is concerned, it is not so surprising that it should be found in this symbol since it is so closely associted with man. In the myth of the war beween the horse and the yak, man takes the side of the horse against the yak, but it is not because of this myth that the horse is represented here, since the yak also finds itself in the same representation as we shall see. As I mentioned earlier, the four animals are:

1. *khyung*, eagle
2. *'brug*, dragon
3. *stag*, tiger
4. *seng ge*, lion

However, in a manuscript entitled 'The Appearance of the Little black-headed Man' the text of which was composed around the thirteenth century A.D.,[18] it is the yak and not the lion that we find in the *rlung rta* composition. The same representation with the yak is also found in a Nakhi painting.[19] It is therefore obvious that from a certain period the yak is replaced by the lion probably when the lion became the national emblem of Tibet. So change and evolution has occurred in the *rlung rta* make-up. In certain ritual texts even a synthesis of different elements is tried in order to give a coherent picture of the *rlung rta*. Thus, each of the four animals is made to represent one of the four astrological elements

16. *Cf.*, Article No.8, p. 150.
17. *Cf.* Stein, 1981: 196.
18. *dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags* (Article No.17).
19. For an illustration of this painting, see Article No.17.



together with its habitat and qualification. To the four astrological elements, the soul (*bla dpal*) is added in order to give a symbolic meaning for the horse which occupies the centre, but such an arrangement is very unsatsifactory since the lion and not the horse is made to represent the *klung rta*.[20] This has obviously brought further confusion, but I am not going to bother you here with this further Tibetan elaboration.

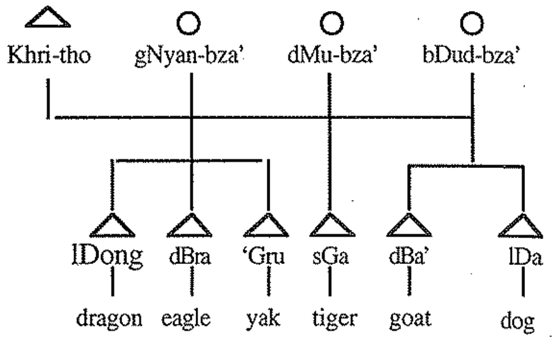
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. *srog* | eagle | sky | eternity |
| 2. *lus* | tiger | forest | growth |
| 3. *dbang thang* | dragon | lake | fullness |
| 4. *rlung rta* | lion | snow mountain | lustre |
| 5. *bla dpal* | horse | cloud | abundance |

The manuscript which I mentioned earlier contains a myth which not only explains why the four animals are found in the *rlung rta* representation, but also how each of the four animals came to be associated with a particular clan. According to this myth, Khri-tho, the primeval man, has six sons: lDong, dBra and 'Gru by his gNyan wife; sGa by his second wife who is from the dMu; dBa' and lDa' by his third wife who is a she-demon. The names of these brothers become those of the six primitive Tibetan clans (*bod mi'u gdung drug*). Here is a summary of the narration:

> "Khri-tho tends his yaks on a mountain called lHa-ri. Seven mounted demon robbers come charging up and drive away all the yaks. Khri-tho pursues them, but his gNyan wife, fearing that her husband may be killed by the robbers, turns herself into a large white frog. It then tries to stop him galloping on his way. When he tries to by-pass it on the right, it jumps to the right. When he tries to by-pass it on the left, it jumps to the left. Khri-tho, already furious, is now even more so. He suddenly draws his sword and hits the frog on the back. The latter gives out a threefold scream. It was heard by the old gNyan-rgan De-ba, the father of the gNyan wife. gNyan-rgan realises that his daughter is being killed. He then shoots his dreaded lethal arrow which kills Khri-tho dead beside his wife. Khri-tho's six sons then discuss on whom to take revenge, the gNyan or the demon robbers. They finally agree that they will first demand the gNyan to pay compensation for the killing of their father and then take revenge upon the robbers. A Phyva god then proposes himself as the mediator between the gNyan and the six brothers. The gNyan finally agrees to give as

20. *Cf.* Article No.17, pp. 254-55.

compensation a dragon to lDong, an eagle to dBra, a yak to 'Gru, a tiger to sGar, a brown goat to dBa' and a white dog to gDa'".[21]




## 4. The four *gnyan* gods

I curtail the rest of the narration, because it is too long to give here in full. The first four animals then become the *dgra bla*, the 'warrior divinity' of each of the first four brothers or clans. The two youngest brothers, curiously enough, ultimately refuse to join in the expedition against the robbers on account of the compensation given to them being too insignificant. In some other versions of the myth, the two are expelled, but no reason is given. It may be because of their failure in solidarity that the goat and the dog are not included in the representation.

Like the early mythical kings, Khri-tho's wives are not human as we have seen. His matrimonial relations do not prevent him from having social conflict with either the gNyan or the bDud nor do the cousins, at any rate the first four brothers stop claiming compensation from their maternal uncle.

The association of the animals with *rlung rta* shows the fact that in early Tibetan beliefs, natural species, especially animals, had an important symbolic role. It is rather tempting to see in these representations a kind of totemic belief, but since the publication of Lévi-Strauss's work on totemism[22] and the ensuing conflict of assessment,[23] there has been a tendency not to talk about it among anthropologists. So I dare not venture on to such unsafe ground here. However, as the names of the brothers became the names of different primitive clans, each clan has its own *dgra bla* represented by one of the these animals as a cult-object. This myth therefore, in my opinion, indicates how, at a given period in Tibetan society, social groups or clans distinguished themeselves from each other

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 272-73.
22. Lévi-Strauss, 1962.
23. Worsley, 1967.



by the association of each one with a particular animal, but it does not tell why the gNyan chose to give these particular animals in compensation. Only the dragon is mythical and not all of them have economic relevance. Therefore they may have been selected for their individual characteristics. As we have seen, the two youngest brothers are not content with the compensation which is a goat and a dog. Although these last two have symbolic 'social value' in a marginal way, they do not normally occasion exploitation of their characteristics as the other four animals do, for example,

1. eagle, skill
2. dragon, resounding
3. tiger, bravery
4. yak, strength

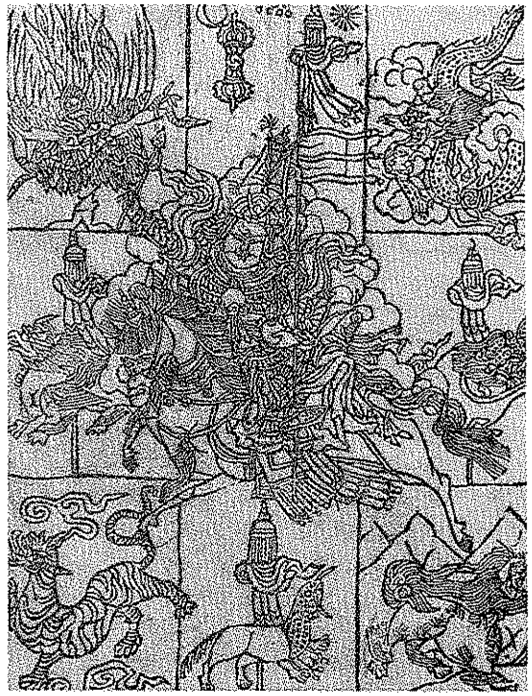


*Plate 40: A form of rlung-rta containing a figure of Gesar.*

*Plates 39 - 40: SGK 1987*

In the Gesar epic, eagle, dragon and lion are the symbols of three lineages in the Gling community and the tiger is sometimes added in order to represent the family of sTag-rong, Gesar's paternal uncle.[24] Because of

24. Stein, 1959a: 496.

the representation of these different lineages, we often see what seems to be a *rlung rta* image, but in the centre the horse is ridden by a warior (*cf.*, Plate 4). In this case, it is a representation of King Gesar and his people and not the *rlung rta* properly speaking. King Gesar himself belongs to the clan lDong, his family's symbol is therefore the dragon.

This myth and the *bsang* ritual are not only closely connected with the concept of the *rlung rta*, but also the whole concept of the *rlung rta* as it developed is part of Tibet's secular cult of height and mountains, a theme on which I gave a paper at the London conference in April this year.[25]

25. *Cf.* Article No.23.



# Mountain Cult and National Identity in Tibet

> "When secular customs break down, when traditional ways of life disappear, when the old solidarities crumble, it is, indeed, frequent that crises of identity arise"[1]

The early Tibetans, that is to say those of the Imperial Period which lasted from the seventh to the ninth centuries A.D., were aware in many different ways of their own ethnic identity. For example, they were very proud of the geographical location of the country. We find in ancient documents eulogies of the way in which the country is situated, its natural beauty, purity and wildness. One such hymn expresses this pride:

"Tibet is high and its land is pure.
Its snowy mountains are at the head of everything,
The sources of innumerable rivers and streams.
It is the centre of the sphere of the gods".[2]

During this period, too, the country's geographical identity was expressed in terms of its centrality in relation to four other countries with which there was contact. India in the south was looked to as the source of religion; Iran in the west was envied for its great wealth; Turkestan in the north was feared for its military aggresiveness, and China in the east was admired for its knowledge of science.

One of the elements which play a significant role in Tibet's cultural identity, as much today as in the past, is the mountain cult. An example of this is the cult of Mount lHa-ri Gyang-to in Kong-po, upon the summit of which according to an ancient myth,[3] the first Tibetan king descended from heaven and the deity of Mount Yar-lha Sham-po in Yarlung, which was considered as the ancestral deity of the Yarlung Dynasty,[4] is also good evidence for this cult. One of the early kings is even named gNam-ri, 'Sky Mountain' which is one of the reasons why the Tibetan national flag has an image of a mountain and a snow lion, the emblem of Tibet, in its centre. This flag is now, of course, forbidden in

1. Lévi-Strauss, 1977: Preface. Translation from French by the present author.
2. Article No. 6, pp. 89-93.
3. On this mountain see Article No. 14.
4. Bacot *et al*, 1940: 81, 86.

its own land, even to the extent that a foreigner wearing a T-shirt or carrying a bag with this flag on it in Tibet runs the risk of being jailed. It is no wonder that these Tibetan national symbols should be considered so dangerous: they are not just recent means of identifying the country but go back right to the Imperial Period.[5]

The concept of national identity in Tibet was, however, much more clearly expressed in ancient times than in, say, the Middle Ages. With the advent of Buddhism and particularly from the eleventh century onwards, the national consciousness of the Tibetan people suffered greatly. This is, of course, not really suprising when we consider the manner in which Buddhism took hold on the minds of the people at large, especially with the prevailing monastic education. Nationalism requires will, self-assertion, self-identification and self-determination, and these notions have no place and receive no respect in Buddhist education as we know it. Tibetan monastic culture had a very strong tendency to discourage any contact with foreign religion and culture. If patriotism is the core of nationalism and if it were ever felt, it is often expressed in terms of protecting Buddhist doctrine and its institutions and not the country as a nation or a state. In other words, immersed in the tranquility of Buddhist compassion, there were periods in which the Tibetan people had almost forgotten who they were and where they were. When a Tibetan lama met a Mongol Khan or a Manchu emperor, it was only on very rare occasions that the lama took the trouble to put his national interest first. This Buddhist equanimity exerted its effects not only in mentality but also in geography. A Japanese visitor in Lhasa in 1916 was shocked to note that when the Tibetan Government was asked for permission to climb Mount Everest from the Tibetan side by the British Mountain Climbers Association, it did not know that the northern side of the mountain lay within the Tibetan territory.[6]

Since 1950 Tibetans have been merely reduced to one drop of ethnic essence in 'a vast sea of Chinese' as the Dalai Lama put it in a statement in 1985. Indeed, Tibet has not even the status of a stateless-nation in international legal terms. Consequently the integrity of its culture is in peril. But its national identity nevertheless remains alive and has even been reinforced and highlighted by Chinese repression since 1987.

During the last forty years, however, Tibetan Buddhism which once worked to counter a strong sense of nationality, now works the other way. With the Dalai Lama as its spokesman and with his policy of non-

5. *BK* (pp.437-39) contains such indications that could be considered as of ancient origin.
6. Tada, 1972: 72.



violence, Tibetan Buddhism has come to symbolise Tibet's national identy. Moreover, it is proving an effective and ideological counter-balance in the face of the advance of the Chinese brand of Marxism in Tibet.

In the process of awakening the national identify, there are two governing factors in Tibet's case: the experience of being under foreign occupation, and the close contact with Westerners in foreign countries and in recent years, also in Tibet itself. The modern Tibetan nationalist often consciously wills his identification with the Buddhist culture. The greater the repression of his culture and identity, the more articulate he becomes.

In this regard it is important to note that, during the Cultural Revolution, a certain number of edifices regarded as national symbols, were singled out to be razed, for example, the Yum-bu bla-sgang, which is reputed to have been the palace of the first Tibetan king, gNya'-khri btsan-po. This very concrete experience, which was and perhaps still is intended mainly to extirpate national sentiments and erase Tibet's national identity, has in fact taught the Tibetans to be aware more than ever of their own culture and to love it.

The Tibetan nationalist's overt consciousness of his own identity is now expressed not only through his Buddhist culture - although Buddhism does largely dominate, since the idea of a Muslim Tibetan is almost unthinkable for Tibetans in general -, but also through two secular traditions: epic literature and the secular beliefs, such as the mountain cult.

Unlike the mountain cult, the former is a written tradition which has given us the world's longest epic. Epic literature was forbidden in monasteries and looked down on by the Buddhist clergy, but it has become the most popular reading in many parts of Tibet in recent years as a result of a period in which secular literature was encouraged in preference to religious material. The hero of the epic, King Gesar, the 'elected king' is in fact a personification of the ideal Tibetan man, that is to say a man who can perform supernatural feats when engaged in battle. When he is not so engaged, he simply goes into retreat in order to practise meditation as if he were a man of religion. It is evident that the stories of his conquest of different countries and his other heroic exploits, however fictitious they may be, have contributed to awakening the national consciousness, as have depictions the characteristic boldness of the Khams-pa warriors and their patriotism. But it is particularly the literary and poetic language in which the epic is written, as well as the ideas it expresses, that illustrate Tibet's cultural identity.

During my research mission in Amdo in 1985 and in Lhasa in 1987, I noticed not only the abundance of printed copies of the epic literature, but also audio casettes containing entire episodes of the epic

retold by famous bards. Posters showing different characters from the epic were also available in bookshops and markets, although some of this prolifration reflects to some extent the interest of the propaganda machine in this epic. The most glamorous printed poster was often not of King Gesar but of his elder half brother, rGya-tsha Zhal-dkar, whose mother is supposed to be Chinese as is clear from his name. One of the characteristic elements which has contributed towards enhancing cultural unification among Tibetans is King Gesar's worship of Mount Ger-mdzo. The early kings, who ruled the Tibetan empire at its height, regarded Yar-lha Sham-po as their ancestral deity (*sku bla, gtsug gi lha*). King Gesar, too, considers the deity of this mountain as his celestial father in the same way as the mGo-log people in Amdo regard A-myes rMa-chen as their grandfather.



*Plate 41: A-myes rMa-chen, Ru-lag g.Yung-drung-gling (SGK 1995)*

Here follows a short ethnographic description of the mountain cult which belongs to what I call the 'unwritten tradition of the laity'. This is because neither Buddhist nor Bonpo clergy has any significant role in this cult, although it represents a supremely important element underlying Tibetan ethnicity. By the mountain cult I mean particularly the secular worship of the mountain deity (*yul lha, gzhi bdag*), who is usually depicted in the style of a traditional warrior and is worshipped as an ancestor or an ancestral deity for protection. This secular worship is in contrast to the cult of such mountains as Mount Tsa-ri for Buddhists, Mount Bon-ri in Kong-po for the Bonpo or Mount Tise (Kailash) for



both faiths. These mountains are designated as *gnas ri*, 'holy or sacred mountain', being the object of Buddhist veneration usually abound with small monasteries and hermitages on their peripheries. On important days, they often swarm with hermits and pilgrims performing circumambulations as a spiritual exercise. This type of mountain cult originates in Buddhism with its idea of devotional excercise and so embodies no specific Tibetan ideas in its representations whereas the origin of the cult of *yul lha*-type mountain deities pre-dates the pre-Buddhist era. The *yul lha*-type mountains therefore do not attract devotees in a purely religious sense, for example, no circumambulations are performed around them. On the contrary, they are worshipped by the layman who may be a hunter or a trader concerned with purely mundane affairs as we shall see.

The manner in which this type of mountain cult is practised varies from region to region, but the central idea remains the same everywhere. During my research mission in Amdo in 1985, I was able to make some observations of one such mountain-cult ritual in a region known by Amdowas as Shar-khog or in Central Tibet as Zong-chu. This region lies to the south-east of Amdo just to the north of the Chinese town of Songpan and is included in the present administrative unit of the Aba (rNga-ba) Autonomous Prefecture under the Sichuan provincial government. Songpan is an important trade centre situated as it is on the threshhold of the main and narrow route leading from the south-east of Amdo to the Sichuan province proper. A Dunhuang document states that the Tibetan Army first penetrated there in 701 A.D.[7]

The people of this region are known locally as Shar-ba, a term derived from the local name of the region, Shar-khog. Our historian dGe-'dun chos-'phel has suggested that most of these Amdo people are the descendants of the royal army from Central Tibet of the seventh century,[8] an idea which seems to fit the Dunhuang records. The population of the region, who are sedentary, number around 24,000 according to the local administrative authority.[9]

The predominant religion of the Shar-ba is Bon, but small pockets of dGe-lugs-pa and Sa-skya-pa followers are also found in the area. Villages used to be grouped according to a political federation system in which from four to seven villages, with a sacred mountain and a monastery for education and religious gathering comprised a federation.

7. Bacot *et al*, 1940: 39.
8. *Bod chen po'i srid lugs dang 'brel ba'i rgyal rabs deb ther dkar po, mKhas dbang dge 'dun chos 'phel gyi gsung rtsom phyogs sgrig*, Chengdu, 1988, p.41.
9. More detailed anthropological study of this population and of the country in collaboration with my French colleague Philippe Sagant is underway and we hope to publish it in the near future.

Each federation had its own leaders as well as social and political institutions: elected council, militia for self-defence (each family needed to have a good horse and a gun ready whenever required), and a general assembly of adultmen. Like most parts of Amdo, the region of Shar-khog was an semi-independent principality before 1950; it paid no kind of tax either to Central Tibet or to the local Chinese authorities. The historic relation between this Tibetan region and the local Chinese town is one of conflict. The region was totally unknown to Westerners since no Christian missionaries penetrated there as they did in Dar-rtse-mdo (Tachenlou) or Ba-thang in Khams; and the few Western travellers who went there early in the twentieth century either ventured no further than Songpan or just passed through the region without taking much interest.

The local social and political organisation of Shar-khog was, of course, completely shattered after the 1960s. Previously, there were annual religious and secular festivals which took place either at village or federal levels. Each federation had a different date for its own festivals. During one of these festivals, which I witnessed in 1985, it was the mountain-cult that reminded me my own participation in a such ritual in my childhood. The ritual was forbidden from as early as 1960 and only reinstated in 1983; we know why it was so feared. The prohibition was so ferocious that in Shar-khog even the cairn on the mountain was scraped out.

The festival took place on the 4th of June, 1985. It lasts two days and only men take part and in the ritual I observed there were about 200 people. On the first day, the men gather together with their horses and tents on a plateau in front of the sacred mountain (Plate 43). Each man must bring an arrow (*mda' rgod*) five or six meters long which has been prepared in advance (Plate 42) and which is made from entire young pine trees cut down in near-by forests. Early in the morning of the second day the men begin to climb the mountain with their arrows, at first on horse-back and then on foot, until they reach the cairn high up on the mountain. At the cairn, a fumigation offering (*bsang*) takes place (Plate 45) before the ritual of planting the arrows in the cairn; this is then followed by the scattering of what are known as 'wind-horses' (*rlung rta*) printed on small white printed squares launched in their thousands by each participant into the wind, which carries them into the air like a multitude of tiny kites (Plate 46).

Whilst scattering the 'wind-horses' each person, at the top of his voice and in total disregard of others, beseeches the mountain deity for his personal protection and for the realisation of other particular ambitions, or simply asks for help in subduing his enemy. Indeed this cacophonic uproar on the summit of the mountain has a very strange ring. The ritual then concludes with oratorical speeches, songs and dances, horse races and a shooting contest (this last is now no longer included).



The arrow is man's symbol and the ritual gesture of planting it in the cairn places each man who does so under the mountain deity's protection; in the same way, by ritually scattering the 'wind-horses' - itself a symbol of fortune - into the air each man calls upon the mountain deity to increase his fortune, since it is the deity who is regarded as the giver of glory, honour, fame, prosperity, power and progeny. Participation in such a ritual therefore implies total integration into the community: this in turn implies inherited social and political obligation, moral and individual responsbility, and an affirmation of communal and national solidarity in the face of external aggression. By the same token, internal conflict and disunity engender the withdrawal of the deity's favour which will affect the power and prosperity of the community.

The mountain cult in Tibetan culture therefore plays a very significant role in the building up of national identity through each individual's identification of himself as an active member of the community and as a patriot of the nation. This notion is at work in the functioning of the social and political organisations in Tibetan society. It is in fact a survival of the ancient tradition which the spread of Buddhism never totally effaced. Indeed, it is deeply rooted and more marked among Tibetan communities in the border areas, where the Bon religion is often dominant and where encounters with people of different cultures who display their own national aggressivity are a daily experience.

According to theories of nationalism and identity, it is consensus, not ethnography, which is at the basis of the state.[10] In other words, the essential factors are will and determination rather than facts such as having a separate language and written literature and history, economy and geography, custom and belief. However, in Tibet's national identity, basic elements such as religious culture, secular literature and popular beliefs have not only helped to engender Tibetan identiy but also exert a political force in its aspiration to regain independence.

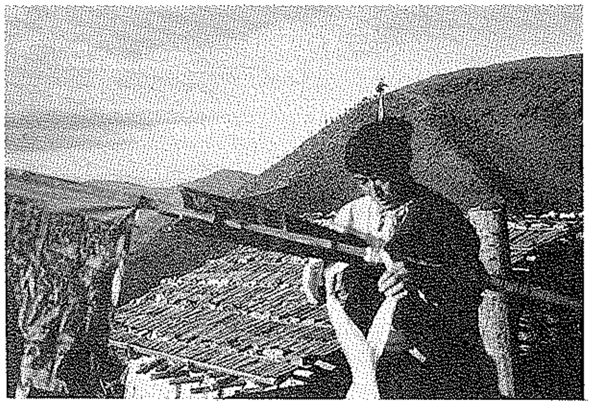


*Plate 42: The man is just about to finish making the ritual arrow.*

10. Gellner, 1983: 53 ff.; 1987: 9 ff.

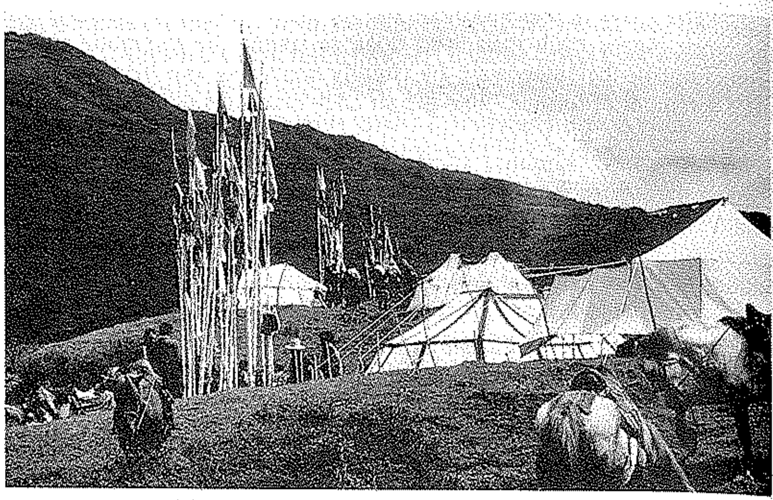


*Plate 43: Camp at the foot of Mt Brag-dkar*

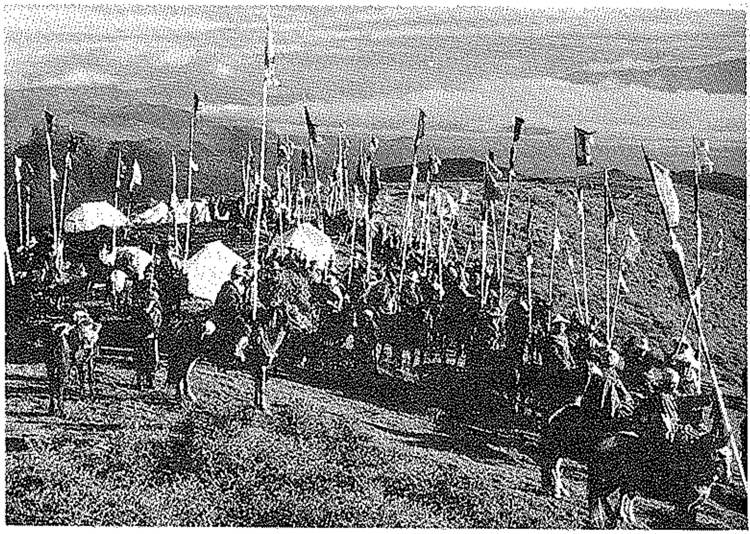


*Plate 44: Men gathering together with their ritual arrows for the celebration of bsang on the mountain called Brag-dkar, the White Rock.*



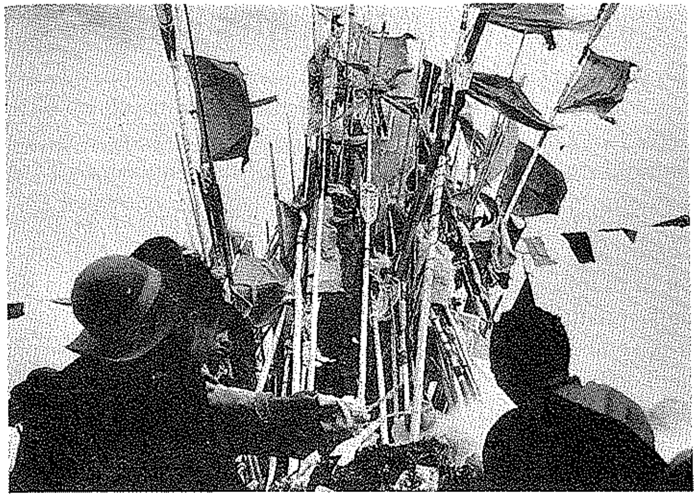


*Plate 45: Beginning of the ritual of bsang with the burning of juniper branches.*



*Plate 46: Scattering the rlung rta in the air.*

*(Plates 43-46 were taken in 1985 while enaged in fieldwork in the region of Shar-khog, Amdo, presently situated in Sichuan, China)*

# The Cult of Mountain Deities and its Political Significance

In Tibetan popular tradition the mountain deities known as 'owner of the base' (*gzhi bdag*) or 'deity of the local territory' (*yul lha*)[1] are often thought of in folk tales as being interrelated with each other in a pattern of 'family relationship' whether at the village or regional levels. This notion is sometimes illustrated by geographical formations. While the mountain deity is viewed as the male spirit, that of the lake situated near the mountain is his consort.[2]

In certain regions the mountain deity of a large community comprising a number of villages is considered as the chieftain and those of the villages as members of his family. These deities are believed to give particular help to the chiefs. The bravery of the headman of a village or the prestige of the leader of a community is often thought to be due to the special favours they receive from the local mountain deity. These men are even sometimes said to be the 'sons' of the local deity (*gnyan bu*). The fauna which lives on the mountains and in forests nearby is considered to be in the domain of the local deity, and the hunters from the village have to make sure by means of ritual that they have the deity's consent before hunting it. The local mountain deities therefore have a social relationship to the men whom they protect as if they were their own descendants. The notion of *gnyan bu,* however, is not specific to one particular region. It is simply more articulated in one region than in another. Indeed literary sources indicate that it is a general notion of the Tibetans in their secular.[3]

The cult of the local mountain represents a secular and unwritten tradition of the laymen in contrast to the monastic establishment in Tibet. Laymen and monks function as two cultural poles within one community. The mountain cult is found to be an exclusive affair of the laymen in most parts of Tibet and further more closely linked with the

1. For a short discussion on these terms see below. There are other terms with similar meaning: *gnas bdag*, *yul bdag*. *Cf. KS*, p.250. *HD*, pp.44-45 (Blondeau, 1971: 80).
2. For example, Ti-se and Ma-pang g.yu-mtsho; gNyan-chen Thang-lha and gNam-mtsho phyug-mo; Gang-bzang and Yar-'brog g.yu-mtsho. *Cf. DzG*, ff.29a-29b, 50a, 55b. sTa-rgo and Dang-ra g.yu-mtsho (Berglie, 1979: 39, 41). Folk tales with this notion among the Tibetan nomads are particularly abundant. However, Ma Lihua (1993) fails to make the distinction between ritual beliefs and folk tales in her article on nomadic life in northern Tibet.
3. See p. 444.



rhythm of seasonal works of the agro-nomadic activities as well as with commercial exploits at home or abroad.[4] The mountain cult is an essential element in Tibetan culture and it has therefore an important bearing on the ethnic identity of the Tibetans, a fact which I tried to demonstrate in a paper presented at a conference in London in 1990.[5]

By mountain cult I refer here to the belief that certain mountains are the dwellings of local deities and are the object of propitiation for mundane pursuits by the local people, and not to the fact that mountains are considered as holy in a pure Buddhist sense. These holy places are called *gnas ri,* the 'mountain where holy persons lived' or the 'place blessed by a certain divinity' (*byin gyis brlabs pa'i gnas*).[6] They are the object of veneration and pilgrimage not just by the local people but by people coming from other parts of the country for their spiritual exercises, and these places are considered holy for the reason that they are believed to have been not only the dwelling places of early saints but also sites where holy books and other sacred objects were either found or still remain hidden. The mountain deities of these holy places are styled as *gter bdag,* 'guardians of the treasury'. It must be made clear that the two cults are therefore conceptually different although in certain regions one mountain can function as the object of both cults, for example, A-myes rMa-chen in Amdo and Mount dMu-rdo in rGyal-rong.[7] However, it seems that the combined cult in these regions is of recent origin since we know that none of the nine mountain deities in Central Tibet with which we shall be dealing shortly has come to be considered in this way although some of them have been incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon.

The mountain deities of the *gzhi bdag* type are the object of worship, especially in the *bsang* ritual the practice of which is still prevalent all over Tibet and also among peoples of Tibetan culture beyond its borders. In a previous article I made a study of this popular ritual and its significance as a purification ritual in relation to men and men's social and religious duties towards their local deities.[8]

The particular aspects of the mountain cult I would like to discuss briefly in this paper are, first, the important aspects of the genealogical relationship of the nine mountain deities in a Tibetan cosmogonic structure; second, the political implication of the cult of the nine moutain deities in the early period; and third, the notion of *sku bla* as the *gnyan* spirits which still remain as the main object of propitiation in the present

4. *Cf.* Diemberger, 1994: 146.
5. See Article No.23.
6. *Cf.* Huber, 1994: 23
7. *Cf.* Article No.25..
8. *Cf.* Article No.21.

day mountain cult of the laymen in spite of the radical transformation of its basic concepts into an ordinary lamaistic practice.

## 1. The notion of the ancestral mountain

The idea of the local mountain deity as the ancestral origin of the local people goes back a long way into history. It bears a relation to the origin myths of the first Tibetan king, gNya'-khri btsan-po. A very detailed genealogical system of the *phyva* and *dmu* deities linked to the first Tibetan mythical king and the nine mountain deities is given in the thirteenth century historical work *DChB*.[9] In the genealogical system of origin myths, the first king is presented as the 'grandson' of the *phyva* deity Ya-bla bdal-drug, and the nine mountain deities are presented as the 'sons' of the *phyva* deity 'O-lde gung-rgyal, the fourth 'brother' of Yab-bla bdal-drug (Table I).[10] The first king and the nine mountain deities are thus presented as 'collateral cousins'. In other words, they were thought to have originated from a common divine ancestor. In the same work it is stated: "when 'O-lde gung-rgyal was dwelling in the sky he and his nine consorts produced offspring as numerous as raindrops. When he was residing in intermediate space he and his nine consorts produced offspring as many as the atoms of a mountain. When he came to earth he fathered the nine mountain deities".[11]

This clearly shows that there existed a detailed system of genealogy in the origin myths of the first king, but it has been mostly ignored in later *chos 'byung* type sources. In origin myths the early kings and the mountain deities are closely linked in a 'parental relation'. 'O-lde gung-rgyal, being the father of innumerable deities, is called the 'Old deity of the world' (*srid pa'i lha rgan*) or the Great Deity (*lha chen*). It is known that the deities in early Tibetan belief stood in hierarchical relationship to one another, but the involvement of their genealogical aspect with mountain deities has not been noted.

The names of the local mountain deities are often preceded by the appellations of *a myes*, grandfather, *a phyi*, grandmother, *a pa*, father, *jo bo* or *jo jo*, lord, elder brother, *jo mo*, lady, elder sister. In my opinion, these appellations are a reminiscence of the genealogical relation between men and deities that origin myths created in Tibetan culture. It is not simply the social etiquette whereby a young Tibetan may address an elderly family man in the village as *a pa* before his personal name or an elderly woman as *a ma*.

9. Article No.18, pp. 295-303.
10. See Article No.18, p. 296.
11. *DChB*, p.229-30.



The mountain 'O-lde gung-rgyal itself is situated in 'Ol-kha, a region close to the regions of Nyang-po and Kong-po.[12] Some authors have thought that it was in Kong-po and some Tibetan lamas in Nyang-po.[13]

The 'Ol-kha area is not very far from Mount lHa-ri Gyang-to[14] in Kong-po on whose peak the first king descended from heaven. In the origin myths of the king's descent this mountain is naturally important because it was there where the first king alighted. However, there is no suggestion in the myth that the king made a propitiation to the mountain although to my mind this mountain ought to be the 'origin' of the mountain cult because of its connection with the divine king's descent on earth, but that is not the case. In the Kong-po inscription it is stated that a *sku bla gnyan po*, the 'awesome' *sku bla*, to which we shall have occasion to return below, was propitiated by two princes who were brothers.[15] The *sku bla* in question is thought to refer to Mount lHa-ri Gyang-to,[16] but it is doubtful from the context in the inscription that the mountain itself is the object of the cult. In propitiatory texts that I have seen, it is not invoked. It does not belong to the group of the nine mountains since the region of Kong-po where it is located did not come under the conquered territories in the seventh century. The first king, after descending on Mount lHa-ri Gyang-to, leaves for Yarlung where he is welcomed, as one would expect, by Yar-lha Sham-po who then becomes the dynastic ancestral deity in Yarlung.

## 2. The political aspect of the mountain cult

A Dunhuang manuscript names the nine mountain deities and gives the names of the nine feudal lords who propitiated them.[17] The manuscript is concerned with the ritual of *glud* ('ransom').[18] It also provides the names of the regions in which the mountains are located. The manuscript goes on to give six more names of different regions including Dvags-po and Kong-po, but without the mountain deities of these regions as if they did not have any. I shall come back to this question later on.

At least eight of the names of the nine mountain deities of the Dunhuang manuscript correspond to mountain deities mentioned in a

12. *DChB*, p.229-30.
13. Entitled *'Dzam gling spyi bsang* and attributed to Karma-pa Rang-byung rdo-rje (1284-1339), in *sGar bsang chen mo dang gto bsngo nyer mkho'i rigs*, Delhi, 1977, p.217.
14. *Cf* Article No.14.
15. Richardson, 1985: 66-68.
16. Ariane Macdonald, 1971: 300.
17. This MS was studied by F. W. Thomas (1957: 52-102).
18. *Cf.* Article No.20.

Bonpo ritual text entitled 'the account of the *gnyan*, the brave deities' (*lHa rgod gnyan gyi byung rabs*).[19] The Dunhuang document designates the deities as *sku bla* and simply calls them the Nine Deities (*lha dgu*). The Bonpo text just mentioned describes them as 'Brave deities' (*lha rgod*). In *GG*, the Bonpo work on cosmogony, they are described as the deities of the earth (*sa'i lha dgu*) in contrast to the nine deities of the heavens (*gnam gyi lha dgu*).[20] In late Buddhist sources they are known as the 'nine deities of the world that came into existence' (*srid pa chags pa'i lha dgu*).[21] At the end of this paper I show the different readings of the mountain names and their locations since there is considerable confusion and overlapping concerning the identities of the mountains in late Buddhist sources (Table II).

However, the nine mountain deities as mentioned in the Dunhuang manuscript are, in my opinion, the *lha dgu* evoked as witness amongst other deities to the oath taken upon the establishment of Buddhism as the state religion by the emperor Khri Srong-lde-btsan (742-c.797) in his edict.[22] The fact that this royal edict had to invoke these native deities shows not only the importance of the belief in mountain spirits but also how they had a political significance since the nine mountains were mostly located in the territories that were conquered and that constituted the first nucleus of the Tibetan state under the reign of King gNam-ri slon-btsan in the early part of the seventh century.

Here are the names of the places, the lords and the deities as they appear in the Dunhuang manuscript according to the reading of F. W. Thomas (1957: 74-76). I have not been able to consult the manuscript itself. Nine types of demons (*srin*) are also mentioned in the manuscript after the name of each mountain deity, but I have not quoted them here since they are not pertinent to the subject on which I want to dwell in this paper. In the fourth column of the table below, I have tried to localize the places in the regions which we know by different names in our own day.

From these locations of the nine places and their deities it is evident that one territory is ruled by a local chief and he has a local deity who also oversees the same territory. As one local chief has the right to rule only over his own territory so does his local deity oversee only that territory.

19. The text is also known as *lHa rgod drag bdar* and is included in *sKang 'bum*, Delhi, 1973 (Karmay, 1977, No.70), Vol.II, 38. 541-56.
20. *GG*, p. 57 (Karmay, 1977: No. 1).
21. *TS*, p. 490.
22. *KhG*, f.109a,6 (Richardson 1980: 65).



| | Locality | Deity | Lord | Localization |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | rTsang-shul mitho[23] | rTsang-lha Pu-dar | rTsang-rje Pu-ha | gTsang |
| 2 | gNubs-shul gling-grug | gNubs-lha mThon-drug | gNubs-rje Sribs-pa | gTsang |
| 3 | (Ngas-po) | Thang-lha Ya-bzhur | Thang-rje Sum-po | 'Phan-po |
| 4 | Ngas-po khra-gsum | Klum-lha Thugs-po | Drang-rje rNol-nam | 'Phan-po |
| 5 | sKyi-ro ljang-sngon | sKyi-lha Pya-mangs | sKyi-rje rMang-po | sKyid-chu |
| 6 | Yar-khyim sog-yar | Yar-lha Sham-po | 'O-de sPu-rgyal | Yarlung |
| 7 | dBye-mo yul-drug | dBye-lha sPyi-gangs | dBye-rje Khar-pa | ? [24] |
| 8 | rNgegs-shul | rNgegs-lha Pya-rmang | rNgegs-rje Gling-'brang tse'u | Yarlung |
| 9 | 'Ol-pu dag-dang | 'Ol-lha Sha-zan | 'Ol-rje Zin-prang | 'Ol-kha ? |

This notion is further illustrated by a legend quoted by the historian dPa'-bo gTsug-lag phreng-ba from a very old source, but unfortunately his citation stops short. So only five out of the nine mountain deities are mentioned.[25] Although this is just a legend it nevertheless gives further indication that in early times the mountain cult in a clanic society was connected with territorial division and this seems to have been organized on the basis of four factors, viz. the territory, the chief clans, their castles, and their local mountain deities (Table III). The story is set during the period just after the collapse of the Tibetan empire. The famous Buddhist monk minister Bran-ka dPal-yon was executed, not long before the breakup of the empire, on the charge that he had had a liaison with one of the queens. As a consequence, his spirit had become malignant. In an assembly of gods and demons over which he presided he demanded that all feudal chieftains be either killed or banished beyond the

23. I am aware that Marcelle Lalou (1965: 193-203) has systematically taken the second part of all the names of principalities as the names of their capitals, e.g. rTsang-shul as name of the principality and mTho its capital. She is certainly right in most of the cases. However, in my table I have not made this distinction.
24. A district called g.Ye near 'Bri-gung is mentioned in *Ta si byang chub rgyal mtshan gyi bka' chems* (hereafter *Si tu bka' chems*), Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1989, p.197.
25. *Lo rgyus chen mo* by Khu-ston brTson-'grus g.yung-drung, see *KhG*, f 154a,7.

borders. However, he was begged by certain mountain deities to allow at least the nine chieftains to remain in their own territories with their forts and their local mountain deities.

However, if one local chief annexes neighbouring territory he seems also to adopt the local deity of the annexed territory for propitiation in order to safeguard his annexation. This seems to have been the underlying factor of the belief in mountain deities in early times and was perhaps the reason why the nine mountain deities were invoked as witness by the emperor Khri Srong-lde-btsan in his edict. Since the early seventh century the kings of the sPu-rgyal dynasty in 'Phyong-rgyas began to annexe the neighbouring territories and consequently as many as nine mountain deities had to be propitiated. This process seems to have been a factor giving birth to a myth in which a kinship pattern developed among the local deities of the annexed terrotories as being 'brothers' of Yar-lha Sham-po, the clan deity of the sPu-rgyal dynasty.

The Yarlung kingdom's capital was located in the 'Phyong-rgyas valley to the south of the river gTsang-po. On the other hand, the kingdom of Zing-po-rje sTag skya-bo, which was in the region of Ngas-po, the present day 'Phan-po, was situated to the north of the river gTsang-po. King Zing-po-rje seems to have ruled not only over the Ngas-po region but also over the modern sKyid-chu valley where Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, is situated. It was in the Ngas-po region where lie parts of the gNyan-chen Thang-lha mountain chains. This was the first kingdom to be annexed by gNam-ri slon-btsan who himself personally led his army numbering 10,000 soldiers for the conquest, as shown in the Dunhuang document *PT* 1289 called the Chronicle.[26] It is evident that the mountain deity Thang-lha Ya-bzhur was the main deity propitiated by the king Zing-po-rje as the main local deity. The victory over this king by gNam-ri slon-btsan is metaphorically expressed through the images of the two local mountains: Yar-lha Sham-po and Thang-lha Ya-bzhur in the song of the minister Zhang-snang, which was sung at a feast to celebrate the conquest of the kingdom of Zing-po-rje. The song epitomizes the political and military superiority of the Yarlung kingdom over that of Zing-po-rje. I quote it here in part:

'The summit of Thang-lha was cut off.
It was added to the inferior part of Sham-po!'
(*thang (lha) ni rtse bchad ching (bcad-cing)/*
*shan po ni rmed du' bsnan/* )[27]

After the conquest of this northern kingdom, gNam-ri slon-btsan began to annex the province of gTsang in the west. However, the

26. Bacot *et al*, 1940: 108, 137.
27. Bacot *et al.* 1940: 108, 142.



conquest of gTsang was carried out by the famous minister sPung-sad zu-rtse, a man of Zhang-zhung origin. The territorial expansion of the Yarlung kingdom in its early stage therefore took place first from the south towards the north and then towards the west in the reign of gNam-ri slon-btsan. The order in which the names of the nine localities and their mountain deities given in the Dunhuang manuscript does not therefore reflect the order of the historical events of the territorial conquests.

During the reign of the emperor Khri 'Dus-srong (b.676), the conquered territories in Central Tibet were already definitely established as parts of the empire. The minister mGar Khri-'bring was thought to be disloyal and suspected of harbouring the ambition to take over the imperial throne. The emperor disapproved the conduct of the minister and admonished his suspected intentions in a song in which the mountain deities were taken, this time, as witness to the political legitimacy and stability of the imperial power of the sPu-rgyal dynasty:

'The (mountain) Tseng-ldeng bra-gu ( of the area of mGar)
or Yar-lha Sham-po,
Which is big? Which is small?
All the people know it!
The (river) sKya-chu sngon-mo (of the area where mGar resided)
or the (river) Yar-chab chu-bo
Which is long? Which is short?
Thang-lha Ya-bzhur knows it!
Gling-dgu, the lake in bsNubs ( = Yar-'brog g.yu-mtsho),
or Le-gong, the lake in Grang-po (of the area of mGar),
Which is big? Which is small?
The (goddess) Sha-med gangs-dkar knows it!
The (castle) Khang-skya at Phya-mda' (of mGar),
or sTag-rtse at Phying-ba,
Which is high? Which is low?
Yar-lha Sham-po knows it!.....

*tseng ldeng ni bra gu dang/*
*yar lha ni sham po gnyis/*
*gang che ni gang chung ba/*
*'greng brgya'a ni kun kyang 'tshal/*
*skya chu ni sngon mo dang/*
*yar chab ni cho bo che/*
*gar (gang) ring ni gang thung ba/*
*thang lha ni ya bzhur mkhyen/*
*gnubs mtsho ni gling dgu'a dang/*
*grang po ni mtsho le gong/*
*gang che ni gag (gang) chung ba/*

*sha med ni gangs dkar mkhyen/*
*pya (phya) mda'i ni khang skya ba/*
*pying ('phying) ba'i ni stag rtse gnyis/*
*gang mtho ni gag (gang) dma' ba/*
*yar lha ni sham po mkhyen/...*[28]

The members of the nine mountain deities had to be changed in the course of time. Some had given place to new comers. This change reflects stages of development of the Yarlung kingdom and its expansion. As we have seen, the nine mountains were located in the adjacent conquered territories and they are all found in Central Tibet, but some important territories which figure among the twelve principalities[29] are not included in the nine, for example, Dvags-po. The reason for this seems to be that the Dvags-po region in an earlier period was under the Yarlung kingdom, but it revolted. After the conquest of gTsang, the question arose as to who should be appointed as the general to lead the army in order to reconquer Dvags-po. In this connexion the Chronicle uses a phrase *dvags po lha de dgug pa,* 'to summon the deity of Dvags-po' which seems to me to indicate the role of the belief in the local deity in the preparation of the war against Dvags-po. J. Bacot has translated the phrase by 'en vue de réduire le prince du Dvags-po'. He has taken the term *lha* for a person of royal status as it often occurs in the titles of the Tibetan kings, *'phrul gyi lha,* for example. Bacot's translation[30] is therefore correct in the sequence of the historical events, but in my opinion, there is also a ritual dimension in the way in which the phrase is used.

Whatever the case may be, Dvags-po was reconquered only after the annexation of gTsang in a later period of the reign of gNam-ri slon-btsan in the seventh century, but the conquest was not a decisive one, for when the emperor Srong-btsan sgam-po (d.649) was young, Dvags-po amongst others revolted once more.[31] This seems to me the reason why Dvags-lha sGam-po was not included in the nine deities in the Dunhuang manuscript which also refrains from mentioning the mountain deity of Kong-po although the manuscript has taken care to give the names of the feudal lords of both Dvags-po and Kong-po. The second retained for a very long time a separate identity within the Tibetan kingdom in the imperial period. From the Kong-po inscription of the ninth century we learn that it

28. *Ibid*, pp. 119, 163-64.
29. *DChB*, p.225; *KhG*, f.140a,5-140b,5; Lalou 1965; Ariane Macdonald, 1977: 196-98, 317-328.
30. Bacot *et al*, 1940: 106, 139.
31. Bacot *et al*, 1940: 106, 139



was still a feudatory state with an autonomous status towards the end of the eighth century.[32]

However, in later sources like *DChB* (p.230) the obscure rNgegs and 'Ol territories in the original list of the Dunhuang manuscript are replaced by the Dvags-po and Kong-po provinces, a modification suggesting that in a later period the two regions became more important than the other ones.

In certain Buddhist sources even the mountain deity 'O-lde gung-rgyal himself is included as a member of the nine, as the 'father', and the remaining eight being his 'sons'.[33] rMa-chen sPom-ra, too, is included in certain versions of the list. I would suppose the inclusion of this mountain deity must be very late and may be from Tsongkhapa's time because this master is said to have propitiated the deity as his natal deity (*skyes lha*).

### 3. The cult of *sku-bla*, the *gnyan* spirits

In early ritual texts, the soul of the king is called *sku bla*, 'soul of the body'. The word *sku* here is an honorific term for the body of the king. By extension through the genealogical system, the nine mountain deities - the first Tibetan king's 'cousins' - are also regarded as *sku bla.* It is no wonder then that these nine mountain *gnyan* spirits were the object of propitiation as 'ancestral deities' by later Tibetan kings even when they became Buddhists in the eighth century. This is perhaps a most appropriate place to pay homage to Ariane Macdonald who was the first to make a superb analysis of the notion of *sku bla* in relation to what she called a 'royal religion'.[34]

However, the cult of *sku bla* was by no means a royal prerogative. They were propitiated by the kings as well as by their feudal chiefs residing in different territories under the dominion. Feudal chieftains propitiated their own local particular mountain deities, often taken as their ancestral clan divinities, just as the kings themselves in Yarlung propitiated Yar-lha Sham-po, as we have discussed earlier.

The term *gnyan* at first impression does not seem to present any problem concerning its definition. However, at the conference where this paper was presented, it appeared that there was considerable confusion concerning the notion of the *gnyan.* In popular rituals it normally refers to the spirits that occupy the intermediate space in the vertical axis of the universe: the *lha* in the heavens, the *gnyan* in the middle and the *klu* on the ground - as conveyed in such expressions as *lha klu gnyan gsum.* In this cosmographic structure, the *gnyan* is normally understood as being

32. Richardson, 1985: 64.
33. *TS*, p.490.
34. Ariane Macdonald, 1971.

the *gzhi bdag* as they are thought to dwell at high altitudes, such as mountains tops. As we have seen, the *gzhi bdag* is also called *yul lha*, 'deity of the local territory' since his domain is limited by the boundary of the territory which he oversees. In this case, gNyan-chen Thang-lha, Yar-lha Sham-po and other members of the *lha dgu,* though they were originally local deities, may no longer be called *yul lha* as they are propitiated not only by the local people, but also by people in many parts of the country. The expression *yul lha* is already attested in a Dunhuang manuscript where it occurs in a list of different spirits.[35] The expression is often translated by 'the god of the country' or 'dieu du pays'. However, the term *yul* in *yul lha* has, in my opinion, the connotation of 'local territory' in the sense of a defined locality and not simply 'country' as it can often mean. For example, *yul dpon*, 'local chief', *yul skad*, 'local dialect', *yul mi,* 'local people'. The other ambiguous term *yul sa*, lit. 'local land' has the same meaning as *yul lha* in Bonpo ritual texts devoted to the propitiation of *yul lha*.[36] However, in the Chronicle,[37] the term *yul sa* which occurs there only once, has the connotation only of its literal meaning, i.e. 'local land'. It is used to refer to a landed property alloted to a local chief by the state as his private domain.[38] The process in which the term *yul sa*, 'local land' has come to mean 'deity of the local territory' as that of *yul lha* further proves the fact that the concept of the *yul lha* type deity was originally connected with the territorial divisions of the polity of the early clanic society.

The expression *gzhi bdag* is common in written texts and it is more commonly used in Amdo than Central Tibet where people use the expression *yul lha* rather than *gzhi bdag*. The *gzhi bdag* are not always male as we have seen. There are female ones called *gzhi bdag mo*, for example, the five goddesses of the La-phyi region (*tshe ring mched lnga*) in western Tibet.[39] The *gzhi bdag* are the central part of the cult of height in Tibetan popular tradition and so are often referred to with various terms implying height (*rtse lha, thog lha*). A *gzhi bdag* therefore does not dwell below a village or downstream of a valley. On the other hand, no specific space is allocated to the *sa bdag*, 'master of the soil' who are a different

35. *PT* 1047 (Spanien, Imaeda, 1979: Pl.341, l.228).
36. *KS*, p.300. See also the text *Rang nyid gar 'dug yul lha gzhi bdag gi sgrub mchod bstod pa* in *rGyal gshen bru yi ring lugs gsang sngags cha lag nyer mkho sna tshogs gsung pod*, New Thobgyal: The Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1973, pp.374, 376, 378.
37. Bacot *et al*, 1940: 106, 138.
38. The term *yul sa* alos occurs in another Dunhuang document (*PT* 1047) in a similar contxt: *yul sa gchig (gcig) las gnyis su skye ba'i ngo*...(Spanien, Imaeda, 1979: Pl.332, ll. 37-38). On the system of land tenure, see Bogolovskij, 1972: 18-20.
39. *rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po mi la ras pa'i rnam thar*, Zi-ling: mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1981, p.520; Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1975: 181 *et seq.*



category of spirits from the *gzhi bdag*. The *sa bdag* are believed to be everywhere[40] and have specific functions in Tibetan astrology whereas the *gzhi bdag* do not. However, in certain propitiatory texts[41] the *gzhi bdag* are also described as master of all *sa bdag* in a given locality, e.g., rMa-chen sPom-ra is the chief of all *sa bdag* of the rMa land in Amdo. In this case, the two expressions i. e. *gzhi bdag* and *sa bdag* refer to the same category, i.e. *yul lha*.

The term *lha* in the expression *yul lha* does not prevent a *gzhi bdag* from being a *gnyan*. The term *gnyan* is variously translated by Tibetologists. This is partly due to the obscure function of the spirit as well as the ambiguous use of the term in Tibetan texts themselves. Thus Professor Snellgrove (1967: 297) has translated it by 'fury' whereas Professor Stein (1959: 205, 206) renders it simply by 'montagne sacrée'. In *dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags*,[42] the *gnyan* are presented as one of the six categories of deities who assisted in creating the world and have a different origin from that of the *yul lha*, but both are closely related. In a Dunhuang manuscript the expression *gnyan klu* is given in a list of several spirits as follows: the *thab lha* (deity of the hearth), the *hur zangs* (?), the *gnyan klu* and the *yul lha.*[43] It is clear that this manuscript treats the *gnyan klu* and the *yul lha* as different kinds of spirits. It seems the expression *gnyan klu* is peculiar to this manuscript and refers to the spirits of subterranean world.[44]

In other sources, the term *gnyan* itself is used as an adjective in such expressions as: *lha gnyan*, the 'awesome *lha*',[45] *klu gnyan*, the 'awesome *klu*', *sa gnyan,* the 'awesome locality', *mtsho gnyan,* the 'awesome lake'. By extension, the term *gnyan pa* or *gnyan po* has the same meaning: *bka' gnyan pa* or *bka' lung gnyan po*, 'feared order'.[46] The expression *sku bla gnyan po*, which occurs in the text of the ninth century Kong-po inscription,[47] has the sense of 'awesome' or 'revered' *sku bla* and consequently should not be read as a *sku bla* who is a *gnyan po* as has been suggested.[48] On the other hand, the phrase *gnyan po gsang ba,* which is used in the mythic account of the descent of the Buddhist

40. For a list of the *sa bdag* spirits, see *HD*, p.76 (Blondeau, 1971: 110).
41. *'Dzam gling spyi bsang*, 217-19.
42. See Article No.17, pp. 260-74.
43. *PT* 1047 (Spanien, Imaeda, 1979: Pl. 341-42). *Cf.* also Ariane Macdonald, 1971: 300, 355.
44. *Cf.* Ariane Macdonald, 1971: 300.
45. See Article No.6. p. 91.
46. *PT* 126: *bka' gnyan po lung du stsal te*...(ll.150), *bka' lung gnyan po g.yar du stsal pa*...(ll.160) (Macdonald, Imaeda, 1978: Pl.136).
47. Richardson, 1985: 66.
48. Ariane Macdonald, 1971: 298; Kirkland, 1982: 14-15.

scriptures from the heavens in Tibet, poses a grammatical problem,[49] but it certainly expresses a similar meaning: the 'awesome secrecy'. *DChB* (p.249) has the form of *gnyan pa'i chos* referring to exactly the same thing. In *RPS* the phrase *lha ri gnyan po*, the 'awesome mountain of the *gnyan* deity' is used to designate the local mountain where the local deity dwells.[50] When the army of 'Bri-gung, who was at war with the Phag-mo-gru myriarch, set fire to the bSam-yas monastery in 1353, Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan, the ruler of the Phag-mo-gru deplored the action and warned the 'Bri-gung ruler stating that the monastery had an *bstan srung gnyan po*, 'fearful protector'.[51] In all this, the term *gnyan po* expresses that which provokes a feeling of reverential fear.

On the other hand, the term *gnyan* in the expressions *sa bdag klu gnyan* or *klu gnyan sa bdag*[52] stands for the *gnyan* and so they must be read as the *sa bdag*, the *klu* and the *gnyan*. These three different classes of spirits are presented as one category in the scheme of the eight categories of spirits (*lha srin sde brgyad*) in Bonpo tradition because all three are associated with the earth,[53] but they are not included in the Buddhist versions of the eight categories (Table IV).

The *gnyan* is further connected with the class of spirits known as *ma sangs* who are believed to have 'governed' (*dbang byed pa*) Tibet in pre-historic times, but very little is known about them. In popular literature, the *ma sangs* are so closely connected with the *gnyan* that the term *ma sangs* has become a synonym of *gnyan*. It also occurs as an epithet of the *gnyan* in the form of *ma sangs gnyan*. In certain lexicographic works, it is defined by *yul sa*, i.e. *gzhi bdag*.[54] In a Dunhuang document,[55] the deity Ku-byi ser-bzhi, who is presented as one of the three probable progenitors of the first Tibetan king, is described as the 'master of all *ma sangs* ' (*ma sangs thams cad kyi bdag po*). This deity is often identified with 'O-lde gung-rgyal.[56] In popular beliefs, as mentioned earlier on, when a man performs heroic deeds, he is often considered to be *gnyan bu*, a term mostly used in oral tradition. It corresponds to *ma sang bu*, the 'son of ma *sang*' in Bonpo written

49. *KhG*, f.10b,5. This should be *gnyan po'i* or *gnyan pa'i gsang ba* as in *DChB* (p.249).
50. *RPS*, pp.10-11.
51. *Si tu bka' chems*, p.134.
52. *KS*, pp.236, 248.
53. *Ibid*, pp.236-53.
54. *PS*, f. 91: *ma sang bu = yul sa rma rigs*, 'deity of the local territory (of) the kind of rMa (chen sPom-ra)'.
55. *PT* 1030 (Spanien, Imaeda, 1979: Vol.II, Pl.312 ); Article No. 18, pp. 285-86.
56. *Cf.* Article No. 18, p. 297.



sources.[57] In Buddhist writings the same type of heroes are styled the 'emanation of *ma sangs*' (*ma sangs kyi sprul pa*).[58] Gesar, the epic hero, is described as being a 'man of *ma sangs* origin'[59] since he is believed to be the son of the *gnyan* Ger-mdzo, a *gzhi bdag* of Mount Ger-mdzo located in the Shar-zla region, eastern Khams. In this connexion, the author of the *Yig tshang* makes the interesting remark that when a man has the nine noble qualities he is to be considered as the 'emanation' of *ma sangs* (p.417). This is certainly a survival of a very old Tibetan concept as it is found in the Chronicle[60] where it is stated that the famous minister sPung-sad zu-tse was a man who possessed the 'nine qualities' (*myi chig la tshogs dgu 'tshogs na/*).

The *gnyan* mountain spirits were often considered to be clan deities just as the nine mountain deities were the deities of the nine different clans. Elsewhere I have shown[61] that primitive clan deities were in the form of animals as is indicated by the Tibetan *rlung rta* image. The *rlung rta* is an important element in the purification ritual celebrated in order to purify the *gnyan* spirits. The ambivalent meaning of the term *gnyan* which means wild sheep and goats[62] as well as mountain spirits is significant in this regard. Indeed, a number of mountain deities have an animal origin in the myths of their appearance. Ge-khod, the mountain deity of Ti-se, in the Bonpo tradition is said to have come to earth in the form of a wild white yak which then dissolved itself into the mountain.[63] gNyan-chen Thang-lha, too, is described as a huge and fearsome eagle which came down from heaven in search of a mountain as its dwelling place.[64] The legendary master Padmasambhava is said to have encountered the deity in the form of a gigantic threatening snake.[65] However, the Fifth Dalai Lama saw the mountain deity in his vision as a smiling man mounted on a white horse. The deity welcomed him on his return from China in 1653 when he saw the snow peaks of the gNyan-chen Thang-lha mountain ranges from a distance on his route.[66] Yar-lha Sham-po in the

57. sPa bsTan-rgyal bzang-po, *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud kyi bla ma rgyud pa'i rnam thar* (*History and Doctrine of Bonpo nispanna-yoga*, SPS, Vol.73, NewDelhi 1968, Text Ka, pp.32, 46. Karmay 1977: No.50).
58. sTag-tshang dPal-'byor bzang-po, *rGya bod yig tshang mkhas pa dga' byed* (hereafter *Yig tshang* ), Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1985, pp.407, 416-17.
59. Stein, 1956: 192, 197.
60. Bacot *et al*, 1940: 111, 148.
61. Article No.22..
62. Ariane Macdonald, 1971: 355-56.
63. *DzG*, ff. 29a3-30a7.
64. *dBal phur nag po'i srung ma gter bdag drug gi bskul ba* in *Phru pa sgrub skor*, Delhi, 1972 (Karmay 1977, No.34, 27). 431-40.
65. *HD*, p.47 (Blondeau, 1971: 81).
66. Karmay, 1988b: 36-37.

form of a great white yak as big as a mountain tried to block the way of the Indian master.[67] The deity is also said to have appeared as a handsome man in the dream of a Tibetan queen, but when she woke up, she found that a white yak was lying near her. Later she gave birth to a prince.[68] This story echoes the idea of *gnyan bu*, the son of *gnyan* mentioned earlier. Although the *gnyan* and the *gzhi bdag* are presented as having different origins in mythic narrations, in popular beliefs the *gnyan* nevertheless have come to have the same identiy as that of the *gzhi bdag* and both have the same function in overseeing the territory of a given locality.

The two mountain deities gNyan-chen Thang-lha and Yar-lha Sham-po are better known than other members of the nine due to their incorporation into the Buddhist and Bonpo pantheon as *gter bdag*. Another indication of Buddhist conversion of the native spirits is that they are given either a totally a new name or retain the old one both preceded by the term *rdo rje* (*vajra*). These Buddhist names are known as *gsang mtshan*, 'secret name'[69] and are a part of the ritual subjugation of the native spirits in which a Buddhist master makes the native spirit take an oath by displaying a *vajra* in order to make them protect Buddhist interests; and these spirits are then raised to the status of *chos skyong* (*dharmapala*) and may even be admitted into a *maṇḍala*. Another form of Buddhist conversion is the ordination of the native spirits just as an ordinary native man is converted and given a new name. They may have either the old name or a new one preceded by the term *dge bsnyen* (*upāsaka*) or simply be indianized by being classified as *gnod sbyin* (*yakṣa*).[70] These Buddhist 'titles' are not generic names so to speak since they do not indicate the real character of the spirits. This explains why so many native deities bear 'foreign' names. Theoretically speaking, once raised to the status of *chos skyong*, the spirits in question should no longer be included in the category of the *gzhi bdag*. The subjugation of the spiritual inhabitants of the country is an extremely important part of the process in the Buddhist conversion of the people who believed in their existence. It was mainly for the need to create a sacred environment in accordance with Buddhist ideals of the universe.[71]

The names of *gzhi bdag* often contain the terms *btsan*, *rgyal po* or some other members of the eight categories of spirits (Table IV). This is simply a matter of local style and also due to factors of geographical formation of the locality where the *gzhi bdag* dwells. There is also the

67. *HD*, p.38 (Blondeau, 1971: 74).
68. *KhG*, p.7b,5-6. *LShDz* (Karmay 1972: 69).
69. *HD*, p.39 (Blondeau, 1971: 75).
70. *Cf.* Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1975: 203, 222.
71. Meyer, 1987: 109; Macdonald, 1990.



question of local myths or legends which often attribute to the *gzhi bdag* the appearance of a *bdud* or even a *klu*. For example, if a locality is formed with red rocks the name of its *gzhi bdag* might contain the term *btsan* because the *btsan* dwells in red rocks, but this does not mean that this particular local deity belongs to the class of the *btsan*. Likewise, the names of local deities often contain the word *rgyal po* ('king'), but it does not mean that it belongs to the class of the *rgyal po* of the eight categories. Elsewhere I noted that in the pre-tenth century period this word did not have the connotation of any kind of spirits,[72] but later it came to be associated with a particular type of spirits mostly connected with Pehar who is considered as the chief of the *rgyal po* class in the scheme of the eight spirit categories.

## Conclusion

In present day mountain propitiation the most favoured deity is naturally the local *sku bla*, but for such occasions many types of texts exist called *bsang yig* or *brgyags brngan*, mostly Buddhist adaptations of the early rituals. In these manuals not only the mountain deities of Tibet and those of its neighbouring countries but also a great variety of Buddhist gods of Indian origin and the Dharmapala types of religious protectors are invoked.

As is clear the concept of mountain deities overseeing local territories and that of the parental relation between themselves as well as the idea of their being 'ancestors' of the local people belong not only to the oral and popular tradition but they have their roots in the written tradition. As time passed with the influence of Buddhism, the early character of a warlike ritual of the mountain cult associated with the political centralization of territories has been transformed into an ordinary lamaistic offering where the only reason for the existence of the mountain deities is to protect the interests of the people as benefactors (*yon bdag*) of the Buddhist clergy (*mchod gnas*).

The mountain cult, however, is still prevalent in various parts of the country, but more perceptible in its early form in the peripheral regions of the country where its celebration - unlike the ordinary harmless, colourful and more entertaining lamaistic rituals - not only symbolises the Tibetan cultural identity in its secular form, but also has the effect of re-animating national consciouness against the sinification policies of China, the formidable occupying power. The same instrument that was used to bind Tibet into unity long ago seems to have come back to play a role in affirming its identity.

72. Article No.20, pp. 365-66.

Table I

A genealogical tree of the nine mountain deities according to lDe'u chos 'byung (p. 230)

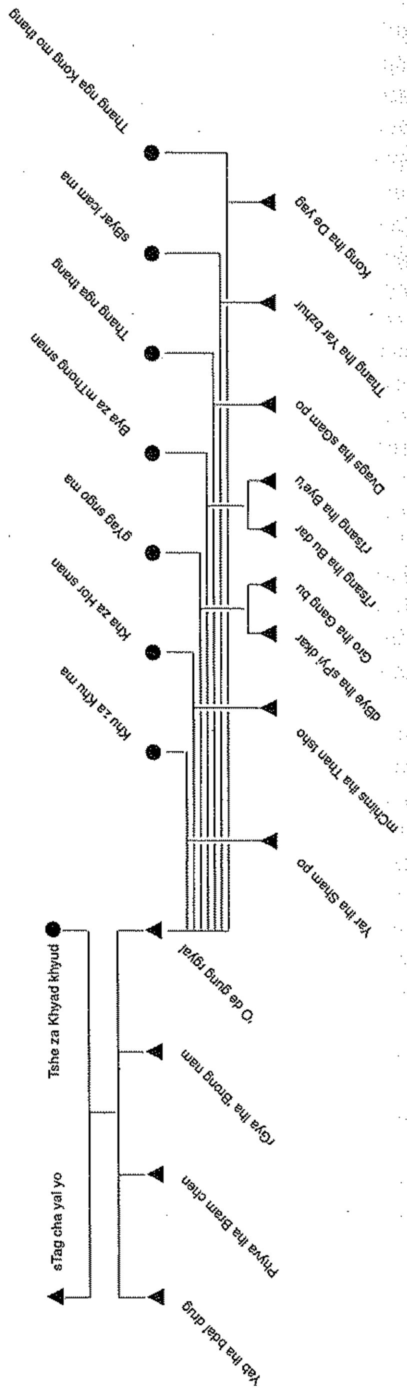





**Table II**

| The Nine deities (*lHa dgu*) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *DD* Region | *DD* Deity | *HG* Region | *HG* Deity | *DChB* Deity |
| 1 | rTsang-shul | rTsang-lha Pu-dar | Kha-rag rtsang stod | rTsang-lha Phu-dar | rTsang-lha Bu-dar |
| 2 | gNubs-shul | gNubs-lha mThon-drug | Nub-yul gling-drung | Nub-lha rTen-drug | rTsang-lha Bye'u |
| 3 | | Thang-lha Ya-bzhur | Thang-ro ral-gsum | Thang-lha Ya-bzhur | Thang-lha Ya-bzhur |
| 4 | Ngas-po khra-gsum | Klum-lha Thugs-po | sTod-lung ral-gsum | sTod-lha Ze-ze | mChims-lha Than-tsho |
| 5 | sKyi-ro ljang-sngon | sKyi-lha Pya-mangs | sKyi-ro ljang-sngon | sKyi-lha Bya-rmang | Gro-lha Gang-bu |
| 6 | Yar-khyim sogs-yar | Yar-lha Sham-po | Yar-yul so-ka | Yar-lha Sham-po | Yar-lha Sham-po |
| 7 | dBye-mo yul-drug | dBye-bla sPyi-gangs | dByi-ma yul-drug | dByi-lha sPyi-sangs | dBye-lha sPyi-dkar |
| 8 | rNgegs-shul gling-brang | rNgegs-lha Pya-rmang | Kong-yul gling-grags | Kong-lha mThong-drug | Kong-lha De-yag |
| 9 | 'Ol-pu dag-dang | 'O(l)-l(h)a Sha-bzan | 'Ol-yul 'ol-mkhar | 'Ol-lha rGyal-bzang | Dvags-lha sGam-po |

*DD* (Thomas, 1957: 74-76).
*HG*, ff.3a-5a.
*DChB*, p.230.

**Table III**

| | Region | Clan | Fort | Mountain deity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | gTsang-stod | 'Bro, Cog-ro | Grom-pa, lHa-rtse | gTsang-lha Bu-dar |
| 2 | Ru-mtshams | Byang, sNang | 'Brang-mkhar, Bye-btsan | Kha-rag Khyung-btsun |
| 3 | 'Phan-yul | sGro, rMa | Zva, Dam | Thang-lha Yar-bzhur |
| 4 | Yarlung | mChims, gNyags | sNar-mo yar-rtse, Mar-rtse | Yar-lha Sham-po |
| 5 | gTam-shul | sNye-ba, Shud-bu | Bya-tshang, Gung-snang | gTam-lha spun-dgu |

*Lo rgyus chen mo* by Khu-ston brTson-'grus g.yung-drung, for references, see note 25.

**Table IV**

| | The eight categories of spirits (*lha srin sde brgyad*) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *KS* | *TS* | *HD* | *HD* | *TS* |
| 1 | lha | lha | 'gong po | 'gong po | lha (deva) |
| 2 | bdud | bdud | bdud | the'u brang | mi 'am ci (kimnara) |
| 3 | dmu | dmu | dmu | ma yam | lha ma yin (asura) |
| 4 | btsan | btsan | dgra lha | btsan | dri za (gandharva) |
| 5 | rgyal po | rgyal po | gnod sbyin | yul lha | gnod sbyin (yakṣa) |
| 6 | gshin rje | gza' | gshin rje | sman | nam mkha' lding (garuḍa) |
| 7 | sa bdag, klu, gnyan | ma mo | ma mo | klu | klu (nāga) |
| 8 | srin po | srin po | srog bdag | sa bdag | lto 'phye (mahoraga) |

*KS*, pp.237-51.
*TS*, p.485).
*HD*, pp.75-76. *HD* also gives another unusual list of the eight which I have not quoted here.



# The Cult of Mount dMu-rdo in rGyal-rong

In August 1993, I stayed for two weeks in rGyal-rong (Chinese: Jinchuan) doing some fieldwork[1] and was able to observe the cult of Mt dMu-rdo.[2]

rGyal-rong was regarded as a 'hidden land' (*sbas yul*) being an almost inaccessbile place. It is associated with legends of the renowned Tibetan monk Ba-gor Vairocana of the eighth century A.D. He is believed to have been exiled to this region after being accused of having had a liaison with one of the queens of the Tibetan Emperor Khri Srong-lde-btsan (742-c.797).[3] This legend is important, as will be seen, for understanding the motives of Sangs-rgyas gling-pa (1705-1735)[4] and his journey to rGyal-rong and ultimately the significance of Mt dMu-rdo for the present-day rGyal-rong people.

rGyal-rong is situated to the north of Dartsedo (Dar-rtse-mdo, Ch. Kangding). To the east it has a natural barrier, the Alashan mountain range, which cuts it off from Sichuan province proper, but is under the jurisdiction of the Sichuan government. It consists mainly of a long and very narrow valley stretching for more than 200 km, starting from the region known as Tsha-kho in the north. The valley gradually widens in its lower parts, particularly from the point where lCags-zam-rdzong is situated. Traditionally this is the Sino-Tibetan frontier. There is the famous iron suspension bridge over the river. A legend has it that it was built by Thang-stong rgyal-po (b.1385). From this place on the inhabitants also become more explicitly Chinese.

The basin of the valley is occupied by the great river rGyal-mo dngul-chu which flows from the north in a southerly direction. At the

1. The research mission I undertook in Amdo and Khams in 1993 was under the auspices of the Laboratoire d'ethnologie et de sociologie comparative, Université de Paris-X, Nanterre. Thanks are due to the Tibetological Centre in Beijing which sent one of its personnel, gDugs-dkar Tshe-ring, to assist me on my travel.
2. In rGyal-rong dialects dMu-rdo is pronounced as Murto and is often written Mu-rto. There are also other names for this mountain: gNas-chen dMu-rdo lha-gnyan, g.Yung-drung spungs-rtse and sKu-lha dBang-phyug.
3. For a short account of the life-story of this monk, see Karmay, 1988a: 17-37.
4. Alias Padma g.yung-drung snying-po, Byang-chub rdo-rje-rtsal and bsTan-gnyis gling-pa. He is one of the four masters in the New Bon tradition (Karmay, 1972: 185) belonging to the trend which was the precursor of the eclectic movement (*ris med*) in the nineteenth century. On the *ris med* movement, see Smith, 1970; Blondeau, 1985: 153-57; Karmay, 1988a: 35-37.

point where it reaches the Rong-brag-rdzong (Ch. Dan Ba), it picks up an affluent coming from the west and then makes a sharp bend, cutting through gorges flowing on in an easterly direction. After a short distance, it meets another large tributary, the bTsan-chu which streams from the north-east and passes by the town bTsan-la on the left and Mt dMu-rdo on the right. At certain points of the main valley, the gorges are so narrow that the river occupies the whole width of the basin, about 800 metres wide. There is only one main route in the valley running along the river on its right. The other side of the river often being steep rock-faced mountains, one sees only a strip of the sky at several points. The steep sides of the rock-faced mountains are often totally vertical for about 800 metres high, then the valley gradually opens up allowing habitation and agriculture.

In summer, especially in August, there is heavy rain. Consequently the river now and then rises and overflows washing away parts of the poorly built road alongside the river bank on the right. Another cause of the damage to the road are the landslides. Sometimes an enormous rock has fallen into the middle of the road totally blocking it. When this happens, the only way to remove it in a short time is to dynamite it. (Travellers with vehicles are asked by the road-menders to pay for the explosive). The road that follows the course of the river is the only main road communication in the valley for going up to Barkham ('Bar-khams) or going down to lCags-zam.

**The administrative set-up in present-day rGyal-rong**

Although the people of rGyal-rong are culturally homogeneous and geographically constitute one entity, the region has been the victim of the old Chinese policy: 'divide and rule'. It is chopped up into two halves: the northern part is under the administrative unity of the Ngaba (rNga-ba, Ch. Aba) 'Autonomous Prefecture' whose adminstrative centre is in Barkham; and the southern part, which begins just after the Chu-chen rdzong, comes under the jurisdiction of the Gardze (dKar-mdzes, Ch. Ganzi) 'Autonomous Prefecture' whose capital is now Dartsedo. This division is very arbitrary. Indeed, it has the intended effect of cutting off one half of the population from the other and as usual there is now little communication between them. When the rGyal-rong people were united they were famous for their tenacity in fighting against the Manchu army, in the eighteenth century[5] and their resistance to the communist onslaught was of epic proportions. Because of these historical memories, the Chinese has made sure that they are not easily reunited. (The same policy has been applied to the other parts of the provinces of Khams and Amdo).[6]

5. *Cf.* Mansier, 1990: 128-30; Greatrex, 1994.
6. *Cf.* Article No.31.



Neither the Ngaba nor Gardze regions have traditionally anything to do with rGyal-rong except that they are people of Tibetan culture. The administrative centre for the Ngaba prefecture should logically be in the Ngaba region itself, but Barkham, though it is in Tsha-kho and was traditionally close to rGyal-rong, is chosen since its environment and climate is congenial to the Chinese settlers. For the same reason, Dartsedo is chosen as the capital for Gardze prefecture yet Gardze town itself should logically be the capital. In both cases, the Tibetan names Ngaba and Gardze are used to designate the prefectures simply for political reasons.

The administrative centres of the counties like Rong-brag or Chu-chen in rGyal-rong are situated in commercially strategic places, that is, down at the riverside. They are predominately occupied by the Chinese with their concrete buildings. In spite of their appearance of modernity, inside the buildings look shabby and incredibly dirty.

The villages in rural areas are mostly situated far away up in the mountains.They, however, seem to have been little affected, at least in appearance, by the recent social and political changes. People in the villages still live in their traditional houses which are invariably square with stone walls. The first floor is extended at the front about one metre beyond the wall itself on which it rests allowing more space for the open air terrace. The living quarter is situated on the same floor comprising several bed-rooms and the kitchen. The second floor is usually smaller constituting one room with another small open-air terrace. In one corner on this floor there is usually a square stone tower with flagpoles. A lot of the houses have vegetable plots around them growing fruit trees, apple, pear and walnut. In August, the villagers descend to the towns in order to sell their vegetable products and fruit which they, usually women, carry in large baskets on their backs.

**The problem of communication**

The rGyal-rong people do not possess a writing system of their own. They have various dialects which they consider as basically Tibetan.[7] The classical Tibetan script was used for written communication up to the 1950s, but it is now being replaced by Chinese writing. When two rGyal-rong persons from different regions speak to each other, they often cannot understand one another and resort to Chinese which has now become the common language among the younger generation in the towns. But many of the young people also remain as ardent in their religious belief as their parents in the villages. As an instance, let me mention our friend in Rong-brag. A young charming woman in 20s called

7. rGyal-rong diaclects are generally considerd as Tibetan, but not all the specialists agree on this point, *cf.* Mansier, 1983: 30-34.

Lhamo. She is married to Tsering, a scholar who works in Beijing. Both come from families of Bonpo background. Being an official she lives in a government owned flat. Her parents live in a village house up in the mountains whereas Tsering's father lives in a flat owned by the local authorities since they are army personnel. He also has a village house and a farm up in the mountains.

Lhamo is a member of the party and the president of the local Communist Youth League. She considers that the Marxist ideology does not contradict one's belief in religion. She does not miss any opportunity for visiting temples when occasion arises and readily accepts the silk amulet to put around her neck that the lama in a temple never fails to give to visitors. Although she fiercely claims to be an adherent of the Bon religion, it is obvious that she and her generation knew little about it. Though her manners and ways of thinking seem to be completely Chinese, after an education in Chinese schools, behind this Chinese upbringing there was no doubt a very strong Tibetan personality that, as I came to learn, was quite common among the young people of today's rGyal-rong. The economic and political situation in rGyal-rong, at the time of our stay, was one of the least strained in China I have ever witnessed.

### The making of a mountain as a holy site

Mt. dMu-rdo is known to the Bon tradition through two 'textual treasure revealers' (*gter ston*): Sangs-rgyas gling-pa and his disciple Kun-grol grags-pa (b.1700).[8] The biographies of these masters are now available in printed editions.[9] This is due to the efforts of our colleague Dr. Charles Ramble who first made microfilms of the manuscripts in Tibet and later helped to make the manuscripts themselves available at Kathmandu. The name of Mt dMu-rdo occurs among the place names where religous texts were believed to have been concealed (*gter gnas*).[10]

In 1727 Sangs-rgyas gling-pa was travelling to Central Tibet from

8. Still active in 1767. His other names are: sMon-rgyal Nam-mkha' ye-shes, Rig-'dzin g.yung-drung gling-pa, sNang-gsal 'ja'-tshon snying-po. *Cf.* Karmay, 1972: 185.
9. The cover title: *sPrul sku sangs rgyas gling pa'i rnam thar gsung pod.* Inside: *U rgyan rgyal tshab bstan gnyis gling pa'i skyes rabs rnam thar gter 'byung lo rgyus bcas rdo rje rin chen phreng ba'i rgyan* (hereafter *rDo rje rin chen phreng ba'i rgyan*), Po ti I-IV. No indication is given concerning the date and place of publication.
*Rig 'dzin kun grol 'ja' tshon snying po'i rnam thar* (hereafter *Kun grol rnam thar*). This 'biography' is divided into three: *Phyi'i rnam thar* (pp.1-378), *Nang gi rnam thar* (pp.379-759) and *gSang ba'i rnam thar* (pp.661-830). It is the second part which contains some historical accounts, but it covers only upto 1737. It is this part that I shall be using and will refer to simply as *Kun grol rnam thar*. Neither the date nor the place of publication is given.
10. *Cf. LShDz* (Karmay, 1972: 179).



Khyung-po in Khams. On the way news of political turmoil in Lhasa reached him.[11] He therefore changed his direction and took the route to Kong-po[12] where he received prophetical signs that indicated that he would be able to reveal 'textual and sacred objects' in Kong-po, Tsha-ba-rong in Khams and especially from Mr dMu-rdo in rGyal-rong (Vol.II, p.127). In 1728, still in Kong-po, he met a monk named Blo-ldan snying-po who was related by blood to the king bsTan-'dzin nor-nu of the kingdom dGe-shes-tsa in rGyal-rong. The monk became a disciple of his. In the same year the king just mentioned sent some messengers to invite Sangs-rgyas gling-pa to rGyal-rong (Vol.II, pp.260-61). In 1729 he left for rGyal-rong, stopping in many places in Tsha-ba-rong (Vol.I, p.323). He 'opened the door'[13] of the *gnas chen* Padma 'bum-gling where he received more messengers from the king of dGe-shes-tsa with an urgent request to visit rGyal-rong (Vol.II, p.570,506). After visiting various places on the way he arrived in the monastery bKra-shis smin-grol-gling in Nyag-rong where for the first time he met his two chief disciples: sMon-rgyal Nam-mkha' ye-shes to whom he later gave the name Kun-grol grags-pa and Ye-shes snying-po. The latter was a prince monk of the dGe-bshes-tsa royal house and Sangs-rgyas gling-pa gave him the name gSang-sngags grags-pa (Vol.III, p.225).[14] The influence of these two men in rGyal-rong was extremely important for the venture of Sangs-rgyas gling-pa as we shall see. Sangs-rgyas gling-pa then passed through Mi-nyag where on the 20th of the 8th month, 1730 he was received in audience by the Seventh Dalai Lama who was then residing at 'Gar-thar (Vol.III, p.376).

This account of travels shows us what Sangs-rgyas gling-pa's real motivation was. He is incessantly urged in his visions to reveal 'treasures' (*gter*) from Mt dMu-rdo and to identify the mountain as a holy site. He believed that Mt dMu-rdo was a place visited by the Bonpo master Dran-pa nam-mkha' in the eighth century A.D., and he considered himself as a rebirth of Vairocana, a disciple of the master, whom we mentioned above. This belief in a master-disciple relation in the past with regard to Mt dMu-rdo seems to have been the driving force behind his undertaking his arduous journey. Unlike other Tibetan wanderers in his time, he made the journey on horseback with an entourage consisting of several people and was met as we have seen by various people sent by the king to meet him on the way. Here is a sketch of the account concerning his adventure around Mt dMu-rdo in rGyal-rong given in the biography:[15]

11. This refers to the civil war that broke out in 1727.
12. *rDo rje rin chen phreng ba'i rgyan,* Vol.II, pp.4-5.
13. For the expression *gnas sgo 'byed pa*, see below.
14. *Kun grol rnam thar*, p.458.
15. *rDo rje rin chen phreng ba'i rgyan*, Vol.IV.

He arrives in rGyal-rong at the beginning of 1731 from Dartsedo. He is welcomed by the king of dGe-bshes-tsa to whom he imparts various teachings.[16] One month after his arrival, he sets out with five assistants for the cave Zla-ba-phug in the valley of Mu-la 'o-kha[17] to the south of Mt. dMu-rdo. This is the beginning of the tracing out of the route for the circuit of the holy mountain (*skor lam*). There he receives various prophecies in a dream. The next day, gSang-sngags grags-pa and Kun-grol grags-pa, his chief disciples, and the king of dGe-bshes-tsa and other people join him. He conducts a *tshogs 'khor* (*gaṇacakra*) ceremony at the cave for them (Vol.IV, pp.36-45). He then leaves for dMu-ra lha-steng (p.45).[18] From there he goes to the cave of g.Yu-sgra-phug[19] accompanied only by his assistants. In this cave he finds various *gter* objects. Some messengers from the king of bTsan-la come to meet him at the cave. Sangs-rgyas gling-pa remarks that this king was not well-disposed to him at first because of the influence of a bad minister (Vol.IV, pp.50-51).

In the fourth month, he is invited by bsTan-'dzin rdo-rje, the king of Pa-vang[20] for the restoration of a *stūpa* believed to have been built by Vairocana near the town Pi-pi-ling.[21] After the restoration he writes a *dkar chag* of the *stūpa*. He presents some of the sacred objects found at the cave to the king as gifts (Vol.IV, pp.51-54). After this he asks his disciple Kun-grol grags-pa to join him at a place called sByar-tshul where they perform an empowerment ceremony (*dbang*) for some unnamed people (Vol.IV, p.55).

Sangs-rgyas gling-pa then accompanied by his assistants goes to bDe-chen-thang [22] where another *stūpa* is restored and also writes its *dkar chag* and he performs an empowerment ceremony for more than one

16. Here Kun-grol grags-pa is invited by the king of dGe-bshes-tsa and Sangs-rgyas gling-pa to join them for tracing out the path around Mt dMu-rdo. Kun-gol at this time was in Khams (*Kun grol rnam thar,* p.572).
17. This is probably near the place where the temple dMu-rdo lha-khang is situated and there the celebration of Mt Murdo takes place (see below). I have not been able to identify most of the placenames and names of villages or towns mentioned in the biography since so much change has occurred, particularly in the last four decades. Most of the places now have Chinese names.
18. This is probably the chief monastery of the Rab-brtan kingdom in Chu-chen usually known as g.Yung-drung lha-steng. *Cf.* Kvaerne, Sperling, 1993.
19. This cave is believed to be that of g.Yu-sgra snying-po, a disciple of Vairocana, *cf.* Karmay, 1988a: 27-29.
20. This is written as dPa'-dbang on a modern map.
21. Kun-grol grags-pa states that in the prophetical texts the town is called Pi-pi-ling and in the local dialect (*yul skad*) it is called (or it means?) Nyams-gzigs-khog (*Kun grol rnam thar*, p.477).
22. In the *Kun grol rnam thar* (p.478) it is stated that this placename occurs in the prophetical texts and in the local dialect it is called A-zha-thang.



thousand people. This place is adjacent to the town Ku-mu-lu[23] to the south of Mt dMu-rdo. During this period, a child of an unnamed queen dies and Sangs-rgyas gling-pa is so distressed by this event that he begins thinking of abandoing his route and returning to Khams, his home land. But in a long prophecy that he receives in a dream he is strongly encouraged to continue the work (pp.55-67).

At Ku-mu-lu, Sangs-rgyas gling-pa writes a long letter to the king of bTsan-la (name not mentioned) stressing the importance of the opening of the path and requests him to provide facilities for the journey (pp.68-74). The letter is dated second day of the 5th month (1731). He then leaves for bTsan-la situated to the east of Mt dMu-rdo. After having some difficulties in crossing the river bTsan-chu, he arrives at Ling-ling, a town where he again meets Kun-grol grags-pa and bestows on this disciple a special red hat and predicts that the latter will rediscover various 'textual treasures' (pp.74-80).

Sangs-rgyas gling-pa then arrives at Ka-ling-ka, a town to the north of Mt. dMu-rdo, where he is welcomed by the king of Ke-gno (p.80-81). After this he arrives at Ka-lam (the whereabouts of this town is not indicated, but presumably it is to the west of the mountain). From this place he writes a long letter to the king of Rab-brtan in Chu-chen requesting him to protect the pilgrims who would do the circumambulation in the future. This letter is supplemented by another written by Kun-grol grags-pa in order to add weight to his requests (pp.81-96).[24] (Kun-grol was the *dbu bla,* the royal preceptor of the Rab-brtan king.) Sangs-rgyas gling-pa continues tracing out the *skor lam* through various places and arrives at Mu-la 'o-kha, the starting point of the route.[25] There he was met again by gSang-sngags-grags-pa and the king of dGe-bshes-tsa, altogether about a hundred people. At this place he announces the completion of the tracing out of the *skor lam* which constitutes what one calls the 'opening of the door of the place' (*gnas sgo phye ba*) (pp.96-100).[26]

From this account of the venture it appears that the process of the 'opening' of a *gnas ri* was an extremely complicated matter indeed. It required a number of appropriate conditions: prophetical signs suggesting

23. This is certainly the name of the village where the temple dMu-rdo lha-khang is built, see below. The *Kun grol rnam thar* states that it means Srib-nang (p.479) and on the modern map it is written as sPro-snang.
24. In the autobiography of Sangs-rgyas gling-pa, no mention is made whether he met the king of Rab-brtan, but it is clear from the *Kun grol rnam thar* (p.482) that he was invited to stay in the palace of the Rab-brtan king which was in Li-ver (Ch. Louwuwei, Mansier 1990:129), the capital of the Chu-chen kingdom.
25. This place is in the vicinity of Ku-mu-lu.
26. For Kun-grol grags-pa's own account of his participation in the tracing of the path, see *Kun grol rnam thar*, pp.472-90.

that the time has come and a *gter ston* or a lama of unusual character with the ability to command the cooperation of the local tribal chiefs as well as to rally the uncouth people on the way.

In the authochthonous setting, most of the mountains in Tibetan tradition were seen as the residence of the deity of the local territory (*yul lha*).[27] Many of these mountain sites were chosen as *gter gnas* ('place of treasure') i.e. a place considered as suitable for 'concealing' mainly written religious texts as *gter* at the time of persecution of the Bon religion or for future purposes in the case of the rNying-ma-pa school.[28] Both traditions maintain that these events took place in the eighth century AD. It is the notion of the *gter*, in my view, that is one of the elements that inspired the establishment of sites for pilgrimage including mountains. A long list of *gter gnas* is known to the Bon tradition[29] and many of these are mountains of historical significance. They are often described as being geographically suitable for hermits to dwell in. If the site is designated as *gter gnas*, its local deity then becomes *gter bdag* or *gter srung*, 'guardian of the treasury' and the place is already considered as sacred. When a textual treasure or other sacred objects are excavated from the place it becomes even more sacred, but to obtain the status of *gnas ri* for a mountain it must be instituted by a man of religion. The making of a mountain *gnas ri* therefore went through different phases in time and space. Its establishment as the *gnas ri* for pilgrimage has a specific function: it is a very effective means for renewing a cultural event by fixing the date of the circumambulation and the celebration of the closing day of the annual event. The celebration is shared by both clerics and laymen alike not only local but from other parts of the country as well.

The phrase *gnas sgo 'byed pa*, 'to open the door of the place' thus conveys the central notion of the pilgrimage site. This action entails the following stages:

1. Tracing out the foot-path around the mountain for circumambulation in the presence of the public;
2. Identifying various places on the path as traces of early dwellers;
3. Designating the last day of the 'tracing out of the route' for the annual celebration.
4. Writing a guide (*dkar chag*) of the holy mountain.

The *dkar chag* that Sangs-rgyas gling-pa claims to have 'revealed as textual treasure' from Mt dMu-rdo is available from the local cultural

27. For a short analysis of the function of this local deity in Tibetan secular culture, see Article No. 23.
28. *Cf.* Karmay, 1972: xxxi-xxxix.
29. *Ibid.*, p.96.



bureau in Rong-brag rdzong. It has taken care to publish the Tibetan text with a Chinese 'translation'.[30]

Like many of the *dkar chag* type work it is mainly concerned with the religious accounts of the holy place, making it look like a supernatural sphere and thus its descriptions of the mountain hardly correspond to the geographical reality.

## The celebration of the 'birthday' of Mt dMu-rdo

The rGyal-rong people have continued to celebrate the event every year. They call it 'birthday of Mt. Murdo' *(dMu rdo 'khrungs skar* or *skyes skar*). This appellation is curious. We will return to it below. The celebration takes place on the 10th of the 7th month, i.e. the horse month, in the Tibetan calendar (in 1993, it was August 27th). From the 23rd of August, pilgrims in small groups began performing the circumambulation. It takes three days of going through gorges, high mountain passes and forests. Mt dMu-rdo is obviously the highest mountain in the region being 4820 meters high. It is a beautifully shaped mountain with about four small peaks if one looks at it from its southern foot. It is situated to the east of the town Rong-brag at the distance of 7 km from it, to the east of the river rGyal-mo dNgul-chu and on the right of the bTsan-chu that flows past the town bTsan-la.

Concerning the circumambulation, people perform it in different ways. It seems that the only way of expressing the difference between religions is to show in which direction one performs the circumambulation of a sacred place such as Mt dMu-rdo. The terms the rGyal-rong people often use to indicate their religions are *bandhe* (=Buddhist) and *bonpo* (both terms are often abbreviated as *ban bon* ), but they often simply say that "we are the ones who go this way", with hand gestures to show in which direction they go round a sacred place, hence identifying their religion. This religious sentiment was expressed in a most spectacular way on the celebration day.

A small temple called dMu-rdo lha-khang is found at the foot of the mountain on the southern side. The old temple was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. However, at the beginning of the 1980s, a

30. Byang-chub rdo-rje, *rGyal mo rong gi gnas chen dmu rdo*, Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1992. The colophon title of the *dkar chag* runs: *sBas pa'i rong bzhi'i nang tshan shar phyogs rgyal mo rong gi gnas chen dmu rdo g.yung drung spungs rtse la sogs ri bo drug cu'i dkar chag* (pp.10-37). In the colophon, the author states that he rediscovered the *shog ser* manuscript in the cave of g.Yu-sgra-phug on the 24th of the fourth month in the iron-hog year (1731) and later 'translated it into Tibetan' (*bod yig tu bsgyur ba*). The title claims that the *dkar chag* is concerned with '60 mountains', but the names of these mountains are not given in the work itself. L. Epistein has used a guide of Mt Murdo in his article (1994), but has not given its title. I presume it is the same work as I have referred to.

Buddhist monk took the initiative to rebuild it. The main statue on the ground floor is that of the dMu-rdo mountain deity as was the case in the old temple. The new temple has two storeys with Chinese styled roofs. On the first floor, there is an image of Thang-stong rGyal-po, the fifteenth century Tibetan engineer whose presence here is explained by the iron bridge which we mentioned above. On the 2nd floor there are images of Tsongkhapa and his two chief disciples. (In the same place there is also an image of Indra in Chinese style, but the presence of this statue in the temple is curious).

Pilgrims who went on to do the circumambulation of the mountain had made sure that they would arrive on the day of the celebration near the temple. They were joined by other people from different parts of the country who came just for the celebration, including Chinese. These Chinese have lived in the country for several generations and have adopted Lamaism. The officials, both Chinese and Tibetans from the Rong-brag county, came in their official cars to join in the celebration. People came group by group streaming up along the road. The first thing a group of people did when they arrived at the place was to make a visit to the temple in order to pay homage to the dMu-rdo deity. However, members of a family and friends in a group often parted at the entrance of the temple in order to follow the tradition of their own religion. Those who considered that their religion was Bon, performed the circumambulation in the Bonpo way (*bon bskor*), i.e. they went round the temple keeping it on the left and those who were Buddhist went round the other way (*chos bskor*), keeping the temple on the right, but they crossed each other at the back of the temple making jokes to each other. Finally they met again at the entrance and then went together into the temple. Once inside, one could hardly see any difference in their behaviour. Old and young prostrated themselves in front of the imposing image of the deity of Mt dMu-rdo who looks very fearful and is mounted on a horse and carries a spear with a flag in his right hand. The whole image is literally covered with cloths of a *rlung rta* type. Many of the people brought handfuls of burning incense as an offering so that the temple, which was very dark inside and terribly crowded, was suffocatingly filled with incense smoke. Beside the main statue, there was a large box for contributions to the upkeep of the temple. One slid money into it by a small slit near its top. A lama beside the statue gave a strip of red silk with a knot in the middle (*srung mdud*) to each of the visitors. They put it around their necks in the belief that it protects them from evil. Some people asked for it not only for themselves but also for their people at home.

Outside the temple on the right, there was a rock about eight metres high on whose peak was a cairn (*la btsas*) dedicated to the Mt dMu-rdo. The visit inside the temple accomplished, pilgrims went out and



performed the *bsang* purification ritual[31] by burning juniper branches on the rock just described. Many of the pilgrims who went to do the cicumambulation brought a bunch of juniper branches on their back for this purpose. They performed the *bsang* ritual in front of the cairn and made prostrations and scattered the *rlung rta* prints on paper into the air.[32] Having accomplished this ritual devotion, people began to have picnics in tents among the willow trees on the temple grounds and the bank of the bTsan-chu that flows beside it. At the same time a lion *'cham* and folk dances were performed in another place. This was a most spectacular sight. While men wore just a simple *phyu ba* like men in any other part of Tibet, the women wore a typical rGyal-rong woman's dress. Their head-dress was somewhat simple but impressive, having a lot of silverwork in it.

The cult of Mt dMu-rdo in rGyal-rong represents the kind of popular belief in which dogmatic differences are totally ignored. For example, Tibetans normally make a distinction between a holy mountain (*gnas ri* ) and the mountain on which deities of the local territory dwell. The holy mountains are *a priori* a special site where early saints resided for their spiritual realisation. They therefore constitute a proper object of worship (*yul khyad pa can*). Through performing the circumambulation of these holy mountains, pilgrims believe that it helps them purify their karmic defilement accumulated in countless previous rebirths. It is in this Buddhist sense that the *gnas ri* are considered as holy. The mountain deities that are believed to dwell on *gans ri* are seldom iconographically represented. One very rarely sees an iconographical representation of the *gter bdag* of Mt Ti-se or Bon-ri. On the other hand, the *yul lha,* the deities of the local territory, are always iconographically described in propitiatory texts as well as depicted, mostly in the form of a warrior mounted on a horse. Furthermore, they are often considered as ancestors of the local population and as such are the object of requests for mundane affairs.[33]

Although dMu-rdo is considered purely as *gnas ri* in the guide by Sangs-rgyas gling-pa, it now embodies in popular belief the notions of both *gnas ri* and of *yul lha* for the rGyal-rong people. The only other example of this I know is Mt A-myes rMa-chen which is worshiped in similar terms by the local people.[34]

The use of the term 'birthday' (*'khrungs skar*) for the celebration of the mountain is unusual. It is not mentioned in the guide of Sangs-rgyas gling-pa. In my view, it is a reflection of the folk tales in which people tell that such and such a mountain is born, married to, has children as

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31. On this ritual, see Article No.21.
32. On the symbole of this image, Article No. 22.
33. *Cf.* Article No. 23, pp. 427-29.
34. *Cf.* Buffetrille, 1994: 20-23.

well as other adventures and conflicts. The geographical formations nearby the mountain in question are often taken as representing different members of the family. These folk tales are more known among the nomads, but they also occur in written sources.[35]

Another work Sangs-rgyas gling-pa, on the other hand, states that one should perform the circumambulation of Mt dMu-rdo in the horse month (i.e. the 7th month in Tibetan calendar), and especially in the horse year, because in that year all the holy persons of the past 'gather together' on Mt dMu-rdo.[36] However, no mention is made of why they meet together there in the horse month and horse year. The same year is also taken to be an important occasion for performing the circumambulation of Mt Ti-se.[37]

As mentioned earlier, Sangs-rgyas gling-pa believed that Mt dMu-rdo was once visited by the master Dran-pa nam-mkha' as is the case with Mt Ti-se. Now, in the Bonpo tradition this master is believed to have been born in a horse year.[38] This seems to be the reason for Sangs-rgyas gling-pa's claim that in the horse year the saints gather together on the mountain in order to celebrate the sage's birthday. The rNying-ma-pa often celebrate their rituals on the 10th day of a month or in the monkey month and particularly the monkey year, because it is the birth year of Padmasambhava. The rGyal-rong people therefore seem to have forgotten whose 'birthday' it meant. It has simply become that of their sacred mountain. The celebration is nevertheless very significant for them. Indeed, a unique occasion for manifesting their religious identities among themselves as well as a means of expressing their cultural difference from the Chinese.

### Concluding remarks

In spite of the communist ideological drive that has now spanned more than four decades, the religious belief of the rGyal-rong people has remained very strong and has even counteracted the relentless sinification policy of their neo-imperialist master. This religious belief, given particularly lively expression through the mountain cult, embodies all the aspects of their ethnic identity. The mountain cult is a characteristic trait of Tibetan secular culture. However, the rGyal-rong people express it in their own way in the form of popular belief reflecting many elements of Bon and Buddhism in a most harmonious manner that is rarely found elsewhere in Tibet.

35. For example, *DzG*, f.24b,4; 70b,4.
36. *gNas chen dmu rdo skor ba'i phan yon*, pp.6-7. This text is found in the booklet containing the *dkar chag* of Sangs-rgyas gling-pa, pp.5-9. For other references see n.31.
37. *DzG*, f.58b,2.
38. See Kvaerne, 1971: 226 (41).



# PART V

# The Gesar Epic

# Gesar: the Epic Tradition of the Tibetan People

The Tibetan Gesar epic has a long tradition. Scholars still do not seem to be able to tell from which period in Tibetan literary history it began, but there are indications which suggest that it goes back to the eleventh century. However, the actual poetic content of the epic in written form dates from about the fifteenth century. The Gesar saga is described as the longest epic in the world and this is not an exaggeration. There are about fifty volumes that I have seen published in recent years in Tibet, China and India.

A limited number of printed texts and manuscripts on Gesar existed in many western libraries and private collections before 1959, and these were used by a number of scholars. H. Francke, M. Hermanns and others published works on Gesar early this century, but foremost among these is of course Professor R. A. Stein. However, their publications in German and French have remained little known to the English speaking world.

You may wonder what this Tibetan epic is all about, but I am certain that epics like the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* are very well known to you. Certain parts of the Rāmāyaṇa were already translated into Tibetan in the ninth century A.D. and some stories from the *Mahābhārata* also became known to the Tibetans through Buddhist literature, but the Gesar epic has no direct connection with either of these Indian epics. On the other hand, no epic literature ever developed in China although the writing of romances took place there to a considerable degree from early times.

The centre of the diffusion of the Gesar epic in Tibet lay in the regions of the mountain A-myes rMa-chen in Amdo, north-eastern Tibet and that of the eastern part of Khams. It is in these regions traditionally that the epic was most popular. It gradually spread not only throughout Tibet itself but was also translated, adapted or transformed into various versions in neighbouring countries. In the west, we have the version in Burushaski in Gilgit, and the Ladakhi version. In the south, the Gesar epic is of course known to the Tibetan speaking peoples of the Himalayas and the existence a particular Lepcha version in Sikkim is also known. In the north-east and east, the epic was translated and further developed in Mongolia where Gesar is pronounced as Geser. From Mongolia it went to Buriatia in Siberia where the epic theme intermingled with the native Shamanistic rituals. These Mongolian translations and the Buriatia versions of the epic were very extensively studied by Russian and German scholars around the beginning of this century. A version in Turkish

coming from southern Siberia was also studied by the German scholar Radolff in 1866. In Manchuria, the Gesar epic was well known particularly during the Manchu Imperial period among the people who followed Tibetan Buddhism, but there Gesar was presented as one of their own divinities, and we shall come to this question later in this lecture. In the south, in the Muli region, that is in the extreme south of the Khams province and now in Yunnan, the Tibetans have maintained the old tradition of the Gesar of Phrom, rather than the Gesar of Gling who is the usual hero in other regions of Tibet.

In Tibet itself, the epic was very popular among laymen particularly in Khams and Amdo. It was common for the names of heroes in the epic and their horses to be given to people and their horses. In villages, usually one or two elderly men were able to recite or tell several episodes on special occasions, but reciting or reading the epic was forbidden in monasteries and in some regions even in private religious sancturies. It was rather the hunters, brigands, and traders in their caravans who read or told episodes that suited the actual conditions of their over-night stops in lonely places. However, it was the bards who were the most proficient. These bards were mostly illiterate but they were able to recite by heart at considerable length different episodes which they learned from childhood. In certain regions, they would be invited to recite episodes on special occasions by a prominent family or by a group of people. The bard Jampal Sangdag whom Professor Stein met in Kalimpong in the 1950s was the bard of the Rva-sgreng regent.

The Tibetan epic is made up of both prose and verse. While the prose narrates the events the verses contain the dialogues between two people or often two opponents. Each opponent supplies his own name, his origin and the purpose of his combat or gives other reasons to explain why he has come before engaging in the battle. The dialogue is mostly expressed in poetic terms. A bard therefore recites the narration at various pitches and sings the verses. The Tibetan bards never use any musical instruments as their Mongolian counterparts do. There are also women bards as we shall see in the video recording I made in Lhasa last year.

The Tibetan epic is still expanding. It is not just simply a literary corpus inherited from the past as some scholars thought, although the episodes do occur naturally in sequence according to the the age of the hero from birth to death. There is therefore a stock set of episodes recounting the campaigns that Gesar himself undertook. Apart from these episodes, which are more or less set in a chronological order, recent authors, like Khams-sprul, have written new episodes. In one of his episodes the hero deals with a country at war and provides its name as Phyi-gling 'Jar. This is thought to be a reference to Nazi Germany. Other recent authors like Kha-lu Rinpoche, on the other hand, have taken up the



subject by presenting it in more Buddhist philosophical terms. In his work the hero, instead of engaging in real battles as in other episodes, deals with the demon of death.

However, the original intention of the epic was to illustrate aspects of Tibetan secular culture, the glorification of heroic deeds and other such mundane exploits and values which laymen of the moutains and villages admired. It is because of this secular theme that the ecclesiastic body tended to have a very low opinion of the epic culture although the epic itself is by no means free from Buddhist influence. After all, most of the authors, who remain anonymous, were Buddhist writers. It is also because of this Buddhist influence in the epic that certain scholars thought that the Tibetan epic was used as a vehicle for propagating Buddhism or had a civilising effect in the Buddhist sense in places where Buddhism was less widespread. There is no doubt that the Buddhisization of the hero and his deeds is a prominent feature in many episodes, because Gesar is invariably presented as a sort of 'manifestation' of the Buddhist mythical saint in Tibet, Padmasambhava. The climax of the religious degeneration of the epic was reached at the end of the nineteenth century when 'Ju Mi-pham began to devote to it volumes of *sādhana* that is texts containing rituals which in effect transforms the hero into a full Buddhist divinity. This was hardly an innovation, because we know that wherever Buddhism arrived it always tried to convert or transform the local and native spirits and then incorporate them into its pantheon. However, this religious development of the epic has happily remained apart from the main epic tradition.

There was another tendency in which the hero was sometimes identified with other deities by the Tibetan lamas. These deities were not necessarily always Buddhist ones, and sometimes it was done for political reasons. For example, in the eighteenth century, Gesar was strangely identified to Kwangti, the Manchu protective deity. This caused unfortunate confusion among ordinary Tibetans during the Manchu protectorate of Tibet that is from 1720 to 1912. In certain places in Tibet, there were Manchu residences where temples of this deity were found, and so ordinary Tibetans began to call these temples Gesar lha-khang, the temple of Gesar. In fact the deity Kwangti has nothing to do with Gesar and the deity himself is known among the Chinese as the deification of an early Chinese general of the Tang period. In Mongolia, Gesar is interestingly enough identified with Genghis Khan and even with Unger-Sternberg, the White Russian who attempted to defend Mongolia in 1920 against the Communists.

Let me now say a few words about the secular nature of the epic and its hero. Gesar, the name of the hero in the epic is known to be a transcription of the first Greek and later Turkish title, *kaisar*, meaning 'king' or 'emperor' and the Tibetan Gesar of Phrom is Kaisar of Rome

indirectly derived through Persian phonetics. Let me leave aside the question of this borrowing since it is rather too complicated to deal with in a few words.

In the traditional epic setting, Gesar is born into the Gling family, which ruled a small principality in eastern Tibet. Gling therefore is a real place. He has also a heavenly family which permits the creation of a Buddhist connection with its heaven and pantheon. However, this Buddhist mythical feature of the epic remains only on the surface and it clearly developed in response to Tibetan society being largely Buddhist. Gesar's mission from heaven is therefore to bring peace to people on earth, just as any Buddhist ideal saint. In a certain number of episodes, this Buddhist ideology is sporadically maintained by referring to the hero's enemies as the enemies of Buddhist doctrine, but such a scheme simply breaks down when the hero actually engages himself and his kingdom in military campaigns. Gesar suceedes in becoming the king of Gling and gaining the favour of 'Brug-mo, his future wife, by winning an exordinary horse race. Because of his winning the throne of Gling through the horse race, he is often descibed as the 'elected king'. In the story, he is predestined to lead four major conquests and eighteen military expeditions, and these serve as the basis of the core of the Gesar epic literature.

One of the themes that recurs in several episodes centers on a love affair. Klu-btsan, one of the most dreaded enemies of Gesar, often styled as the great monster or demon, lives in Yar-khams in the north. This monster abducts the lady Me-bza', one of Gesar's favourites and the rival of 'Brug-mo, his wife. The first objective of the campaign against the monster is therefore to recover the lady. In this affair, Gesar is torn between his wife who must remain at home and who pleads with him to stay with her and the lady who is kidnapped and who knows that Gesar will come after her. And the hero in the end does follow her. Almost the same theme occurs again in the episode of the conquest of Hor inhabited by a Turko-Mongol people. In Gesar's absence, his country, Gling is invaded by the Hor-pa and his wife 'Brug-mo, is taken away and forced to marry the king of Hor. The episode ends up with a campaign against Hor.

The character Gesar embodies is at the same time that of superhuman, a miraculous performer, a magician, a historic personality, a hero of romance, a fairy king, a skilful trickster and, in many instances, a formidable brigand. It is a fascinating medieval story, a most bewildering web in which all these threads are woven together. Like the king in the Arthurian cycle, he has knights, thirty in Gesar's case, called *dpa' thur* who are all loyal to him and ever ready to undertake his orders. He reigns over the Gling people with the assistance of these knights. It is a society in which much of the Tibetan traditional culture and social life are faithfully reflected. In other words, it is a true mirror of the traditional life



that existed until 1959. From this point of view, it would be interesting to carry out sociological and anthropological research on the epic, because much of the work that so far has been done on the epic is concerned only with its literary, historical and philological aspects and with the superimposed lamaistic ideology.

Tibetan culture is, as we know, dominated by Buddhism which has submerged the autochthonic culture. The epic literature, on the other hand, subsists on native concepts and beliefs and thereby contributes to preserving and presenting Tibet's own identity in both cultural and national aspects. In other words, Gesar is looked up to as a model of moral virtue and patriotism, though this tendency is more marked among the Mongols than the Tibetans. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Gesar remains a symbol of cultural nationalism among the Tibetans, especially in the provinces of Khams and Amdo today.

In Mongolia it was not the dissenters who were the target of repression, but the Geser epic which was condemned in 1948-49. Published texts were confiscated from the libraries and were forbidden in bookshops. People engaged in research on the epic were punished and their works were branded as without academic value. The epic did not experience the same fate in Tibet, but instead the whole Tibetan culture, whether religious or secular, was condemned during the Cultural Revolution. There was no particular cultural element that was singled out for attack. Then at the end of 1970s, there began in China the policy of liberalisation in different fields especially the economic. For the Chinese authorities it was no longer feasible to maintain the earlier restrictions on publications in Tibetan. Moreover, newly published religious texts, which were unobtainable in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, began to appear on the market. Private printers in China and Tibetan publishers were out for doing business with books on religious subjects. In order to discourage the demand for books on Buddhism and Bon, the authorities hinted that the Tibetans should be encourged more to read their secular literature. In Lhasa, it was felt that one could even publish a book on Gesar. The Tibetan People's Publishing House therefore brought out an episode of Gesar in 1979 for the first time, a most timid looking book without any editorial comment except for a statement that the edition was based on a manuscript kept in the 'depot of documents' of the Tibetan region. Nevertheless, this publication seems to have sparked off other publications of the epic texts. Soon afterwards, in other Tibetan regions, such as Chinghai, Kan-su, Sichuan and Yunnan, many texts containing various episodes of the epic were published. By 1985, it was not only a question of publications, but small research groups on the epic were set up in Peking, Chengdu, Lanzhou, Xining and of course in the Tibtean Academy of Social Sciences in Lhasa. Scholars also began to collect oral

material from the old bards by recording them on tapes. The Tibetan Academy alone has collected and recorded 2000 cassettes. Posters of Gesar and other heroes in the epic were a common sight in Tibet in 1985 while I was on a short research mission there. Tapes containing episodes read by famous bards were available in shops and markets. It was in the region of rNga-khog in Amdo that I came cross a group of middle aged women who sat about in a market around a radio. They were all in tears. It appeared they were listening to a tape containing the story of Gesar's rescue of one of his favourite women from hell.

However, the Chinese propaganda machine has not missed the opportunity to turn epic inventiveness to its own advantage. In the Tibetan epic, the elder half brother of Gesar has a Chinese mother and he plays an important role as one of Gesar's knights. The propagandists therefore use this mythic personality as a symbol of the unity between the Tibetans and the Chinese, and there were posters of this knight which often made him more prominent than Gesar himself in Amdo.

As publications of texts on Gesar multiplied, recorded oral versions were extensively collected and research groups were set up not only in Tibet and China but also in Europe, it was thought feasible to convene an international symposium on the Gesar epic. This was held in Chenegdu in 1987 and it was the first conference on Gesar of its kind. A certain number of Tibetan scholars living in Europe were invited to attend. Some accepted the invitation, but others refused to do so in protest against the martial law which was then imposed in Lhasa. A second international symposium on Gesar was held in Lhasa last August, 1991. It was organised by the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences in Lhasa. This time I attended the conference and had the opportunity, for the first time in three decades, to meet about thirty-three Tibetan scholars coming from various parts of the country and who presented their papers on aspects of the epic. At the conference there were also about fifteen Westerners and about seventeen Chinese from the mainland, Hongkong, Macao and Taiwan, and others from Japan and Mongolia.

There were also three bards as participants at the conference. It was during this conference that I was able to take a video recording of them in session.

First, the bard bSam-'grub, a seventy-one year old man from Khams. He is illiterate, but is able to recite, I was told, about fifty episodes. Since 1985, he has been employed in the Tibetan Academy in Lhasa and began to work with the research group there. In the video, he recites a part of an episode called *Bal ra lug rdzong*, which is entirely unknown to the experts. He is the real type of old professional bard whom we mentioned earlier on. There are only a few survivors like him now.



The second is a lady. Her name is g.Yu-sgron and she is about thirty-five. She is also illiterate and no doubt represents a younger generation of bards. There is something less professionally authentic about her. In the video she recites a part of the very-well known chapter, the Horse Race which was studied and translated into French long ago.

The third, Thub-bstan, aged fifty-nine, was formerly a monk from Se-ra monastery but now works as a director in one of the Lhasa theatres. His recitation concerns the mythic origin of Gesar's helmet describing its various parts which have symbolical meanings. The text he recites is drawn from the *Hor gling*, the episode of the campaign against the Hor people. He performs this as if it were a theatrical piece with a touch of comic gesture. The hats worn by the bards in the Tibetan traditional society were supposed to resemble to the helmet of Gesar. The bards therefore sometimes identify themselves with Gesar when they recite a long episode wearing the hat and enter into a trance.

# The Theoretical Basis of the Tibetan Epic[1]

In the1950s when Professor. R. A. Stein was engaged in his research on the Gesar epic, he wrote: "If there ever existed a complete recension of all chapters, they remain unknown to us. Neither written texts nor oral versions contain the totality of the epic story. And the ones that we know of at present, present themselves in the form of a literature that is still alive and mobile".[2]

Since then, the situation has totally changed with the publication of many previously unknown chapters. Not only those that have come down to us from the past but also the new products of a literature that is still expanding, as R. A. Stein so accurately observed. What I am concerned with here, however, is the theoretical basis which underlies the ordering of the episodes relating to the hero and his life, and the notion of a correct 'chronological order' which the tradition presents, however fictitious the events may be. It is the materials which existed before our time which are most pertinent here and which permit us to identify the theoretical basis of which I speak. That basis provides a perspective on the question as a whole, and a guide through the tangled structure of the Tibetan epic. We are now, as I said, in a better position than in the1950s to make an assessement of the whole body of Tibetan epic literature. We may not know the exact number of chapters and still less their correct 'order', though in Tibet the bards themselves do talk about the order and

1. This article was presented as a paper at the 2nd International Symposium of the Epic of King Gesar, organised by the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences and held in Lhasa 7-13 August 1991.
All the Tibetan texts on the Gesar Epic referred to in this article have been published. The ones published by Bod ljongs mi mang dpe skrun khang, I have simply indicated as Lhasa, mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang as Xining, Kan s'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang as Lanzhou, Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang as Chengdu and Mi rigs dpe skrun khang as Peking.
The Bhutanese edition (*The Epic of Gesar*, Vols.1-30, Thimphu, 1979-1981) has not been used here due to the unreliability of the way in which it is edited and the confusion in its arrangements of the texts. Volumes 27, 28 and 30 are simply reproductions of recent Tibetan and Chinese editions without indicating the references of the originals.
I have not attempted to mention all the manuscripts containing different episodes and existing in various libraries or in private collections nor do I assume the published texts mentioned in this paper are exhaustive. If a text is indicated here, it came to my notice before October 1991.
2. Stein, 1959a: 4. (The English translation is mine).



the number of chapters as we shall see. Moreover, when they tell their own stories these are related to one or other major episodes and it would be incorrect to say that the bard invents a story which has no connection with any of the episodes involving Gesar and his people. But this is not the place to enter on the 'circular argument' as to whether the written or the oral tradition came first.[3]

This epic literature has a beginning, namely, the chapter *lHa gling,* and proceeds through various episodes in a 'chronological order' following the activities of the hero during his life time. It also has an end, since at a certain age Gesar no longer leads any expeditions. This does not mean that the bards or those who read the epic always do so in the correct order, or transmit it orally in a 'chronological order'. On the contrary, one episode will be more popular than another in a given locality and the bards choose which episodes to tell according to the circumstances.

There is, nevertheless, a correct sequence for the episodes, especially the great ones which are regarded as major campaigns and the purpose of Gesar's central mission on earth, prophetically foretold by the hero's divine aunt (Ma Ne-ne rgyal-mo).

The Tibetan scholar gCod-pa Don-'grub recently met a number of bards living in different parts of Tibet and collected a grteat deal of research material on Gesar. He has given special attention to the question of the 'chronological order' of the various episodes and recently published a most interesting article on the subject in a collection of his other writings, all of which deal with on what R. A. Stein calls 'the traces of Gesar' found in Amdo.[4] This particular article gives the following 'chronological order' for the episodes relating to the life of Gesar.

> When Gesar is in heaven he is called Thos-pa-dga'. He comes down to earth and is born to Seng-blon and 'Gog-bza' in order to bring happiness to the world.[5]
>
> At the age of one, he shoots and kills the three black birds sent by sGom-pa ra-tsa by means of magic with the help of Ma-bzhi Khro-thung, in order to undermine the life of Gesar. He subdues sGom-pa ra-tsa, who is himself a magician.

3. Hermann, 1988: 197-201.
4. *Gling ge sar rgyal po'i skyes rabs lo rgyus rags tsam brjod pa (Gling ge sar rgyal po'i shul rten gyi ngag rgyun ngo mtshar me tog phreng mdzes,* Xining 1989), pp.1-17.
5. R. A. Stein provides an edition of the *lHa gling* and a summary/translation (1956: pp. 40-86; 216-274). For a recent publication of the same work, see *'Khrungs skor* (Lanzhou, 1981, 171 pp.). For another slightly diffrent version of the same text, see *'Khrungs gling me tog ra ba* (Chengdu, 1980, 186 pp.).

At the age of two, A-bra Srin-po mgo-dgu causes various misfortunes to the people of Gling. Gesar, in accordance with a prophecy received from Gong-ma rgyal-mo, subdues the animal, with the help of his walking stick called lCang-dkar, on the west bank of the river 'Bri-chu.[6]

At the age of five, he captures the fort Tsha-ba mda'-rdzong in Tsha-ba and makes its king Mig-brgya btsan-po a vassal. In this place he finds three special bamboo arrows. One of these he offers to the *lha*, another to the *gnyan* and the third is kept for men.[7]

At the age of seven, he captures the Fort of Goats, Kha-ser ra-yi ra-rdzong and its king, Kha-ser rgyal-po. He then drives back to Gling thousands of goats amongst which there are white ones with conch horns and black ones with *garuḍa* horns. He distributes the animals equally among the people of Gling.[8]

At the age of eight, Gesar's paternal uncle Khro-thung fears that he may loose his political influence among the Gling people to his nephew. He accordingly banishes Gesar together with his mother to rMa-smad g.yu-lung sum-mdo and so causes them to live like yaks.[9]

At the age of nine, obeying the order given by sPyi-dpon Khra-rgan, Gesar, with the help of his uncle Khro-thung, sets out on a compaign against the king of 'Dan-ma. From the region of 'Dan-ma he brings back barley grains to Gling.[10]

At the age of ten, a great snow fall occurs in Gling country, such as had never been seen before and men and their herds are unable to move about. On the other hand, in rMa-smad where Gesar and his mother live, there is sunshine, showers of flowers as well as rainbows and blossoming of fruit trees. sPyi-dpon, the doyen of the Gling people, despatches rGya-tsha Zhal-dkar, Gesar's elder half brother and Tsha-zhang 'Dan-ma, a hero from the 'Dan country, to rMa-smad in order to rent the grassland in rMa-smad for the Gling people. Gesar gives them the use of the grassland.[11]

At the age of 12,[12] a great horse race is organised by the three principal clans of Gling. The stake is the throne of Gling and the hand of 'Brug-mo, famed for her beauty among not only the Gling but also the Hor people, the deadly enemies of the Gling. Gesar wins the race and picks up the first scarf (*ka btags*) from the ground at the gallop. He therefore marries 'Brug-mo and is enthroned as King of Gling with the name of Seng-chen Nor-bu dgra-'dul.[13]

At the age of 13, the time comes to open the treasury of rMa Shel-brag. There, Gesar finds various armements: a coat of mail of gold, silver and conch-shell; a helmet made of coral, a noose with a ring on its end, a hook, a sword, a garment made of brocade and a belt.[14]

At the age of 14, Gesar gathers together all the heroes of Gling in order to perform the ritual of purification (*bsang*) for the *lha* in heaven, the *gnyan* on earth, and the *klu* of the underworld. This ritual is called *'Dzam gling spyi bsang*, the 'universal ceremony of purification for the world'. On this occasion, he shoots and kills a huge wild yak (*'brong*), because this beast is the 'residence' of the soul of the great demon, Klu-btsan who lives in the North and is the target of Gesar's next campaign.[15]

6. These last two episodes are concerned with the *'Khrungs gling*. R. A. Stein has edited this text and provides a summary/translation(1956: 40-86; 216-74). For a recent publication of the same work, see *'Khrungs skor* (Lanzhou, 1981, 171 pp.). For another, slightly different version of the same text, see *'Khrungs gling me tog ra ba* (Chengdu, 1980, 186 pp.).
7. *Tsha ba mda' rdzong* (Lhasa, 1982, 213 pp.).
8. There does not seem to be a text concerning this episode.
9. The text on this period of Gesar's banishment is probably contained in the Bacot manuscript in Paris, but this still awaits study.
10. *'Dan ma'i nas rdzong* (Xining, 1989,116 pp.).



11. No text so far has been seen on this theme.
12. The connexion of the horse race episode with the age 12 by this author is a mistake. When Gesar is12, the concern is with finding him a horse for the race, but the race itself is postponed till the following year, and therefore takes place when he is 13, see *rTa rgyug* (Lanzhou, 1981), pp.12-14.
13. The text containing this episode is entitled: *rTa rgyug nor bu cha bdun*. R. A. Stein has edited it and provided a translation/summary (1956: 87-140; 275-355). The same text has also recently been published in other editions: *rTa rgyug nor bu cha bdun* (Chengdu, 1981, 258 pp.); *rTa rgyug* (Dharamsala, 1983, 185 pp.); *rTa rgyug nor bu cha bdun* (Lhasa, 1981, 173 pp.); *rTa rgyug rgyal mjog* (Lanzhou, 1981, 251 pp.; 1983, 185 pp.) and *rTa rgyug dpyid kyi nyi ma* (Xining, 1981, 276 pp.). The songs in the episode of the horse race in the text published by Stein have been translated into French (Helffer, 1977).
14. *rMa shel brag* (Xining,1982, 202 pp.). The attribution of this event to the age of 13 is uncertain. The text mentioned gives the age as eight (p.2) and uses the name Jo-ru as if the event were taking place prior to the horse race.
15. *'Dzam gling spyi bsang* (Lanzhou, 1980, 196 pp.).

**The four major episodes:**

I. At the age of 15, Gesar embarks on an expedition in order to subdue the most dreaded old demon called Klu-btsan in Yar-khams. After making friends with A-stag lha-mo, the demon's sister, he eventually kills the demon.[16]

II. At the age of 24, while Gesar is still engaged on his campaign against the demon Klu-btsan, the king of Hor, Gur-dkar-rgyal-po, makes an incursion into Gling and plunders it. He takes away Gesar's wife, 'Brug-mo, by force together with many children of the Gling people. Gesar is informed of the events in Gling when he has already spent nine years in the country of the demon. Leading an army consisting mainly of the subjects of the demon, he goes on a campaign against the Hor. The king of Hor surrenders. After appointing Shan-pa, a great general of the Hor army as governor of Hor, he returns with 'Brug-mo. This campaign takes nine years.[17]

III. At the age of 33, following prophectic instructions of sMan A-ne rgyal-mo, Gesar sets out on an expedition to 'Jang,[18] one of the four enemies of the four cardinal points. The king of 'Jang, gives himself up after a fight. This expedition takes three years.[19]

IV. At the age of 36, heeding the prophetic instructions given by the White Brahma, he leads an army consisting of soldiers from 'Jang and Hor to Mon in the South. The king of Mon, Shing-khri, finally submits. Gesar invites a lama of Mon named Nor-bu to Gling.[20]

At the age of 39, following divine prophetic instructions, Gesar goes into retreat for a year on Mount Potala, paradise of Avalokiteśvara. (Note: in certain versions of the story, it is said that Gesar went into retreat because otherwise he would not be able to lead the soul of the king of sTag-zig to heaven, this country being the objective of his next campaign).

16. *bDud 'dul* (Lanzhou, 1981, 201 pp.).
17. *Hor gling g.yul 'gyed* (Xining, 1980, Vol.I, 562 pp; Vol.II, 668 pp.). The same version of the events in Vol.I of the edition published in Lhasa (1980, 441 pp., Vol.II has not been seen). Another, much shorter is *Hor 'dul gyi rtogs pa brjod pa g.yul rgyal lha'i rnga sgra* (Chengdu, undated, 251 pp.).
18. Here the author of the article puts the country 'Jang in the east (p.8, for full references see n.4). This is impossible, see below.
19. *'Jang gling g.yul skor* (Delhi, 1965, 382 pp.); *Gesar 'Jang gling sgrung* by Ngag-dbang bsam-gtan phun-tshogs (Gangtok, 1977, Vol.I, 596 p.; Vol.II, 607 pp.).
20. Four long texts which are for the most part identical and have the same title: *Mon gling g.yul 'gyed* (Lhasa, 1980, 470 pp.; Chengdu, 1982, 519 pp.; Xining, 1982, 353 pp.; Lanzhou, 1983, 419 pp.).



**The eighteen expeditions:**

1. At the age of 40, he campaigns against sTag-zig. Its king surrenders together with his fort, Nor-rdzong. Gesar brings back to Gling a great quantity of precious objects which he distributes among his people. This campaign lasts one year.[21]
2. At the age of 42, he campaigns against Kha-che. Its king, Khri-btsan, surrenders with his fort, g.Yu-rdzong, which is rich in turquoise. Gesar brings back to Gling a great quantity of turquoise which he distributes to his subjects. This campaign takes one year.[22]
3. At the age of 43, when many people from Gling, carrying much gold, leave for Lhasa in order to make offerings of gold to the 'face' of the three holy images in Lhasa, they are robbed and many are killed in ambush by the people of Mi-nub rma-bya. Gesar, hearing of the events, leads a campaign against the latter. The king of Mi-nub surrenders together with his fort, Dar-rdzong, which is famed for its wealth of silk. Gesar obtains a large amount of silk in compensation.[23]
4. At the age of 44, the time has come for him to capture the fort Mu-tig-rdzong in Zhang-zhung which possesses a lot of pearls. Its king lHun-grub grags-pa, gives himself up and Gesar obtains a large amount of pearls for distribution among his people in Gling.[24]
5. At the age of 46, Gesar's paternal uncle, Khro-thung, takes the daughter of the king of A-grags, Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan, by force and the people of A-grags clash with those of Gling. This gives Gesar an excuse to lead his army to attack the A-grags people. The fort gZi-rdzong, envied for its possession of the precious stones *gzi*, is taken. He carries away the precious stones for distribution among his people.[25]
6. At the age of 47, he campaigns against Gru-gu. Its king Thog-rgod surrenders together with his fort, Go-rdzong, which contains an armoury. Gesar takes away much of the armour for his people.[26]

21. *sTag gzig nor rdzong* (Lanzhou, 1979, 443 pp.) Another, slightly different version of the same work is published under the title: *sTag gling g.yul 'gyed* (Lhasa, 1979, 385 pp.).
22. *Kha che g.yu rdzong* (Lhasa, 1979, 236 pp.).
23. ? *Mi nub rma bya* (I have not seen this text).
24. *Zhang gling g.yul 'gyed* (Lhasa, 1982, 143 pp.); *Zhang zhung mu tig rdzong* (Lanzhou, 1984, 328 pp.).
25. *A grags gzi rdzong* (Xining, 1985. 662 pp.).
26. *Gru gu go rdzong* (Lhasa,1988, Vol.I, 883 pp.; Vol. II, Lhasa, 1989, 246 pp.). The same work was published in Dharamsala (1982-1983) in three volumes.

7. At the age of 49, he campaigns against Me-gling. Its king is defeated and after capturing gSer-rdzong, a fort famous for its gold, Gesar carries away much of the gold for the Gling people.[27]
8. At the age of 51, he campaigns against sMyug-gu. After the capture of the fort Drel-rdzong, the king Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan surrenders with his mules. Gesar introduces different breeds of mules into Gling, as well as inviting back the daughter of the king, lHa-lcam Me-tog.[28]
9. At the age of 52, he campaigns against Sog-po. The king of Sog-po, Nyi-ma lhun-grub gives himself up after fighting and offers Me-ri thog-rdzong, a fort known for its wealth of weapons. Gesar takes away a great number of catapults and 400 guns.[29]
10. At the age of 53, he campaigns against mNga'-ris. Brag-gi rgyal-po, the king of mNga'-ris, surrenders and the fort of gSer-rdzong, which contains a statue of the Buddha made of gold, is taken.[30]
11. At the age of 55, he campaigns against Gangs-ri. Its king, Gangs-dkar is defeated and Shel-rdzong, the fort, is captured. Gesar finds there a coat of mail and helmet all made of crystal.[31]
12. At the age of 56, he campaigns against Tsa-ri. Its king dBang-chen stobs-grags surrenders together with his fort sMan-rdzong, famous for its wealth of medicine. Gesar introduces various medicines into Gling.[32]
13. At the age of 58, he campaigns against Bye-ri. sTag-rtse, the king of Bye-ri surrenders together with his fort, Byur-rdzong. The fort houses statues of Amitayus and Hayagrīva both made of coral which Gesar takes to Gling with other different types of coral.[33]
14. At the age of 61, he campaigns against China. Its king sTag-bdud surrenders and the fort Ja-rdzong is taken. Various kinds of tea are introduced into Gling.[34]

    At the age of 63, Gesar goes into retreat in order to undertake acts of expiation because he has harmed so many living beings whilst on campaigns.

27. *Me gling gser rdzong* (Xining, 1983, 223 pp.); *Me gling g.yul 'khrugs* (Lhasa, 1982, 328 pp.).
28. *sMyug gu drel rdzong* (Lhasa, 1982, 662 pp.).
29. *Me ri thog rdzong* (I have not seen this text).
30. *mNga' ris gser rdzong* (Chengdu, 1981, 233 pp.).
31. *Gangs ri shel rdzong* (Chengdu, 1982, 377 pp.).
32. *Tsa ri sman rdzong* written by dBang-chen stobs-rgyal from mGo-log and completed in 1987 (Xining, 1990, 408 pp.)
33. *Bye ri byur rdzong* (Xining, 1983, 518 pp.). Another text related to this episode is *Ge sar sgang gling sgrung* (Gangtok, 1977, 675 pp.).
34. *rGya nag ja rdzong* (I have not seen the text).



15. At the age of 64, he campaigns against Dung-dkar. Its king, sTag-thub, surrenders and his fort sTag-rdzong is taken. Gesar takes from the fort 168 coats of mail, 9,800 arrows, a statue of Tārā and a noose, all made of conch-shell.[35]
16. At the age of 67, he campaigns against India. The king Chos-lung is defeated and his fort Chos-rdzong is taken. It contains thousands of volumes of *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, written in gold, silver and turquoise.[36]
17. At the age of 68, he campaigns against Nepal. Its king Bal-ri surrenders together with his fort 'Bras-rdzong. From there Gesar introduces rice into Gling.[37]
18. At the age of 69, he campaigns against Bhara. Its king, Khyung-khri, is defeated and his fort Lug-rdzong is taken. From there Gesar introduces three breeds of sheep into Gling.[38]

Between the age of 69-80, Gesar is supposed to have continued taking small forts, listed below, but in fact many of the titles in the list are episodes connected with the knights (*dpa' thul*) rather than the hero himself.

1. *Thog gling g.yu 'gyed*
2. *Sog pyi gling gser rdzong*
3. *Po ri gzi rdzong*
4. *Phyi gling khrab rdzong*
5. *sMar kham byu ru rdzong*
6. *sDe sde chos rdzong*
7. *Khyung chen sgro rdzong*
8. *sPyi dpon shel rdzong*
9. *sGa sde khro rdzong*
10. *rGya tsha'i dngul chu khro rdzong*
11. *Go gu khyi rdzong*
12. *A stag sha rdzong*
13. *Li khri rta rdzong*[39]
14. *Srin mo ra rdzong*

35. *Dung dkar stag rdzong* (I have not seen this text).
36. *rGya gar chos rdzong* (I have not seen this text).
37. *Bal ri 'bras rdzong* (I have not seen this text).
38. *Bhara lug rdzong*. At the Second International Symposium of the King Gesar, held in Lhasa in August 1991, the bard bSam-grub recited an episode of the epic which he called *Bal ra lug rdzong*. *Cf.* No.15 in the list of minor texts.
39. *Sog li khri rta rdzong* by sGrung-gter Nyi-ma rang-shar in mDo-smad (Amdo), (Chengdu, 1990, 254 pp.). Similar but much longer texts include *Sog stod rta rdzong* (Dharamsala, 1982, 585 pp.); *Sog smad khrab rdzong* by Don-rgyud Nyi-ma, the eighth Khams-sprul (b.1931), (Dharamsala, 1985, 823 pp.). For his other works on Gesar, see below.

15. *Bal po lug rdzong*[40]
16. *A bse 'bri rdzong*
17. *Zhang zhung sman rdzong*[41]
18. *rGya tsha'i gri rdzong*
19. *'Dan ma'i mda' rdzong*
20. *Khro thung lcags rdzong*[42]

At the age of 87 Gesar returns to heaven after having appointed his nephew dGra-lha rtse-rgyal King of Gling.[43]

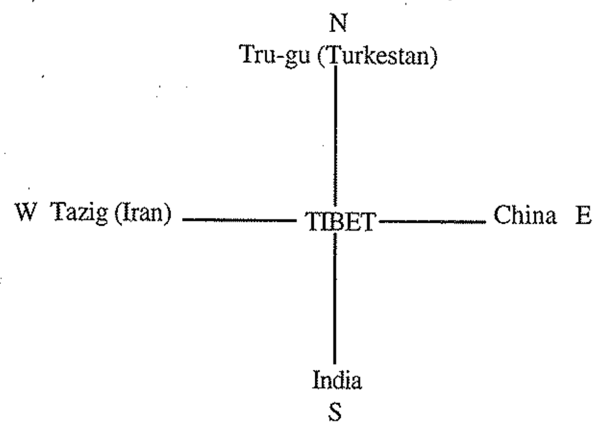
Here ends gCod-pa Don-'grub's discussion concerning the activities of the hero and his knights. It is perhaps here that I should mention some of the works on the epic that do not deal with a particular episode but present themselves as an account of the hero's life as a whole. Among these is one edited by Tashi Tsering, with a very interesting introduction.[44]

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40. *Cf.* n. 38
41. It is not Zhang-zhung, but Shang-shang and is probably identical to the text entitled *Shang shang sman rdzong* written by Grub-rigs khyu-mchog (Lanzhou, 1984, Part 1, pp.1-395; Part 2, pp.396-638). Another text related to this episode is *mThing gling g.yul 'gyed* (Lhasa, 1985, 241 pp.)
42. To this list can be added several more texts that have appeared recently: *Sum gling g.yul 'gyed* or *Sum pa mdzo rdzong* (Lhasa, 1981, 135 pp.); another version on the same episode and the same titles (Chengdu, 1982, 204 pp.); *Shan 'dan stag seng kha sprod* (Chengdu, 1982, 244 pp.); *Ri nub a dkar rdo rdzong* (Xining, 1985, 176 pp.); *Byang sgo ra rgyal po'i tshva g.yang* by lHa-dge bDud-mdul rnam-rgyal (Dharamsala, 1985; Vol.I, 683 pp., Vol.II, 284 pp.); *Ja rong 'bru rdzong* by Nang-so Blo-bstan (Lhasa, 1987, 522 pp.); *rMi li gser rdzong* by 'Brong-stod lHa-dge (Dharamsala, 1985, Vol.I, 513 pp.; Vol.II, 808 pp; *Glang ru* (Xining, 1985, 132 pp.).
43. The bards (*sgrung mkhan* ) do not talk about Gesar's death, because he 'never dies'. However, the episode *dMyal gling* is about his 'departure from the earth', see *dMyal gling rdzogs pa chen po,* 'rediscovered' by Rig-'dzin drag-rtsal rdo-rje in mGo-log (*The Epic of Gesar,* Thimphu, 1977, Vol.31, 357 pp.). There are other texts which have similar titles but contain different minor episodes: *dMyal ba'i le'u* or *dMyal gling* by 'Dan Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1973, 526 pp.). This is concerned with Gesar's rescue of some of his knights who fall into hell after their deaths. A similar text is *dMyal gling mun pa rang gsal* (Xining, 1983, 109 pp.) deals with Gesar's rescue of A-stag lHa-mo, demon Klu-tsan's sister, from hell, and Gesar's complicity. The *dmyal gling* or *dmyal le* types of texts are therefore not always connected with his own departure for heaven, but with his actions spread over other periods of his life.
44. *rTsa ba'i rnam thar*, pp.1-44 (*Gling rje ge sar gyi rtsa ba'i mdzad pa mdor bdus,* Burmiok Athing Collection Series, Vol.III, Dharamsala, 1981). Other texts of the same type are: *Gling ge sar rgyal po'i rnam thar* (Lhasa, 1989, 117 pp.); *'Dzam gling skyes bu'i chos sgrung sil ma las gser chos 'og min bgrod pa'i them skas gsang ba'i rgya can* (*Chos sgrung dang bshad pa rnam bdun*, Chengdu, 1990, pp.1-87); *Srid pa chags lugs* (Xining, 1987, 332 pp.). This last work deals with the hero's life only up to the horse race (*rTa rgyug*).



Fig. I: *The Sino-Tibetan Peace Treaty 821-822 A.D.*




**The Four Adversaries**

The 'chronological order' according to which the successive campaigns are presented shows that the Gesar epic is not recounted just a story consisting of randon episodes. The narrative sequence of the epic is primarily related to the four major episodes, known as the 'four adversaries of the four quarters' (*phyogs bzhi dgra bzhi*).[45] These four then lead on to the military expeditions against the eighteen countries or tribes (*rdzong chen bco brgyad*),[46] i.e. between the ages of 40 and 69 (Fig. VIII). These are considered minor actions by comparison with the four major episodes. The majority of the eighteen tribes are situated in Tibet whereas the four major campaigns are against what are treated as foreign countries.

In the classical theory of the 'Four Sons of Heaven', Gesar is usually presented as the king of Phrom in the north.[47] This theory is further related to the four foreign kingdoms lying beyond the borders of Tibet, the most feared adversaries of the early Tibetan kings. In this framework, the Tibetan kingdom is conceived of as being at the centre and opposed to China in the east, India in the south, the Iranian world in the west and Turkestan in the north. These are known as the 'Four kingdoms of the borderlands' (*mtha' bzhi rgyal khab*)[48] and the early Tibetan kings were thought to be predestined to counter the challenge that

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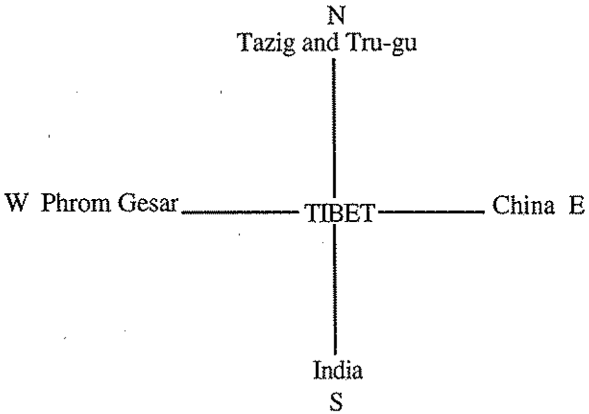
45. *lHa gling* (Lanzhou, 1982), p.42; *bDud 'dul* (Lanchou,1980), p.15 *et seq.*
46. R. A. Stein's translation of the line *mtha' bzhi rgyal khag bco brgyad* as 'les ennemis humains venus des dix-huit royaumes des quatre confins' is incorrect (1956: 195); *bDud 'dul* (Lanzhou,1980), p.12.
47. Stein, 1959a: 254-61; Ariane Macdonald, 1962: 531-548.
48. The bilingual inscription of the Sino-Tibetan peace treaty (Richardson, 1985: p.112, l.37; p.108, ll. 13-14); *lHa gling* (Lanzhou, 1982), pp.79,84, 87,104.

these kingdoms might present (see Fig. I). Historically, of course, Tibet had relations of various kinds with these countries, but the idealized world view reflected in the beliefs of the ancient Tibetans seems to me to have survived, at least in popular literature such as in the epic under discussion.

A different classification of the 'four kingdoms of the borderlands', however, occurs in a manuscript from Dunhuang, where it is enmeshed in a cosmographic description of the four great rivers whose sources are situated in the regions of Mount Ti-se (Kailash).[49] This ninth century document is the earliest source mentioning Phrom Gesar in the framework of the 'Four Sons of Heaven'. Interestingly, Phrom Gesar is here thought to be in the west rather than the north:

1. China in the east
2. India in the south
3. Phrom Gesar in the west
4. Tazig and Tru(Gru)-gu in the north (Fig. II)

Fig.II: *Pelliot Tibétain* No.958



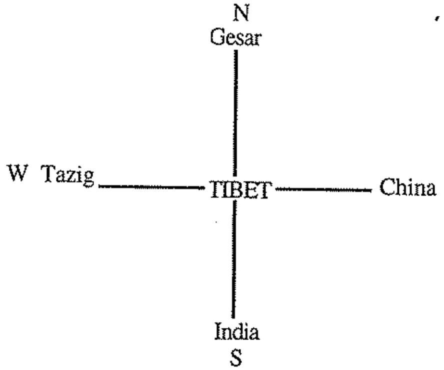

In another fairly ancient historical work, *DChB* (written in 1261), Gesar is situated in the north, but no mention is made of Phrom. At any rate, the way in which the four kingdoms are presented, is particularly worth of consideration. According to the work in question, "when Tibet did not have a king, it was governed by the twelve principalities who, however, were unable to oppose the enemies in the four directions (*phyogs bzhi'i dgra*). India coiled round Tibet, like a snake; China slunk around Tibet, like a wolf lying in wait for sheep; Tazig (Iran) ranged over

49. *PT* 958, f.1a-1b (Macdonald et Imaeda, 1978: Pl. 241-42; *Cf.* also Ariane Macdonald, 1962: 532-35.



Tibet, like a hawk over a flock of birds; (Phrom) Gesar attacked Tibet, like an axe swinging to cut down a tree" (Fig. III).[50]

Fig. III: *lDe'u chos 'byung*

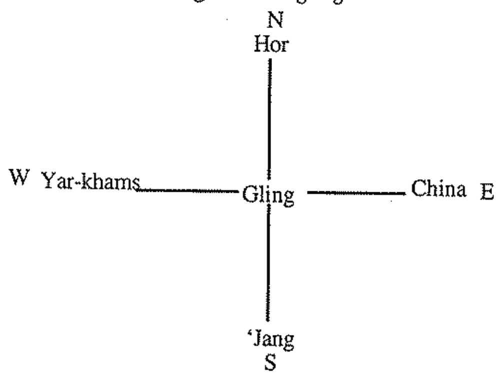



It is not my intention here to take up the arguments concerning whether Gling Gesar has any connexion with Phrom Gesar that have occupied scholars in recent times, although there is little doubt that the name Gesar is borrowed from Phrom Gesar.[51] The main concern of this paper is the basic structure of the Tibetan epic edifice.

Gesar, the hero in the epic, is born with the mission of subduing his four adversaries of the four quarters. These are according to the *lHa gling:*

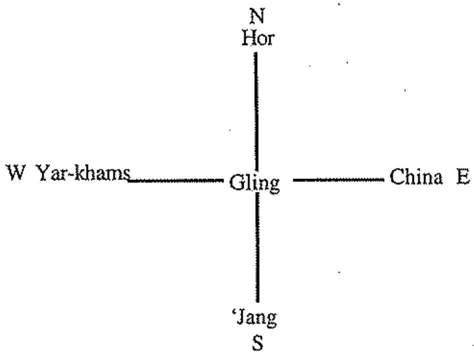
1. Demon in the east, China
2. Demon in the south, 'Jang
3. Demon in the west, Yar-khams byang-ma
4. Demon in the north, Hor (Fig. IV)[52]

Fig. IV: *lHa-gling*




50. *DChB*, pp.220-26
51. Stein, 1959a: 252-53 and 1962: 85.
52. *lHa gling* (Lanzhou, 1982), p.15

Fig. V: *bDud-'dul*



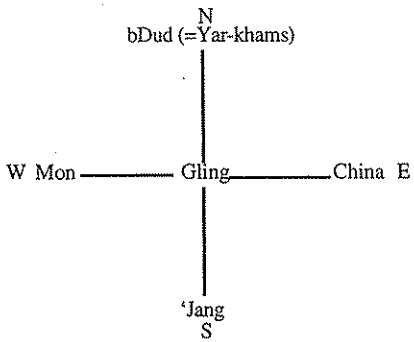

The same classification is found in the *bDud 'dul*.[53] Here, too, China is included as the adversary in the east (Fig. V). However, the presentation of Klu-btsan as the demon of the west, but residing in what seems to be north, Yar-khams byang-ma, has been the source of considerable confusion as we shall see. The demons of the four quarters are further described as belonging to four categories of spirits:

1. the king of Hor, demon of the *lha* (*lha bdud*)
2. the king of 'Jang, demon of the *btsan* (*btsan bdud*)
3. the king of China, demon of the *dmu* (*dmu bdud*)
4. the king of Yar-khams, demon of the *klu* (*klu bdud*)[54]

But there is a change in this traditional presentation of the four adversaries in the episode of the horse race. China is replaced by Mon and the latter is put in the west and Hor in the east:

1. Yar-khams in the north
2. Hor, in the east
3. 'Jang, in the south
4. Mon in the west (Fig. VI)[55]

Fig. VI: *rTa-rgyug*




53. Lanzhou, 1980, pp.12, 83, 98, 108, 116, 119.
54. *bDud 'dul* (Lanzhou, 1980), p.108.
55. *rTa rgyug* (Lanzhou, 1981), pp.2, 238-39

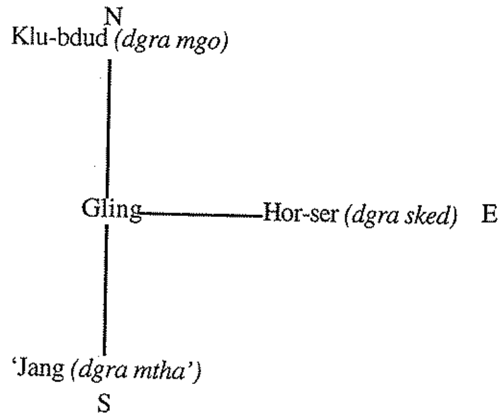


The term Hor is known to refer to a country inhabited by Mongols or a people of Turco-Mongol origin, but within Tibet certain regions are also known by this name, and they are situated in the north-east in relation to Gling. It is also in this context, that is in relation to Gling, that Mon is thought to be situated in the west.

These four kingdoms or countries are conceived of as being in opposition to Gling, the 'Central continent' like Tibet and its neighbours in ancient times. However, there has been some uncertainty surrounding one of the four adversaries. As we have seen in the *lHa gling*, it is China, but in other texts China is replaced by Mon. Although the *Ma yig*,[56] a prophecy which to my mind could represent the original written version of the Gesar epic if such ever existed, is said to have indicated the four great adversaries and the eighteen small principalities that Gesar is destined to capture, there exists yet another tradition according to which the hero, at first, had three adversaries:

1. The first adversary (*dgra mgo*), Klu-btsan in the north
2. The second adversary (*dgra sked*), Hor-ser in the east
3. The last adversary (*dgra mtha'*), 'Jang, in the south (Fig. VII)[57]

Fig. VII: *Mon gling g.yul 'gyed*




In another version still, the last adversary is China and we find a very long text devoted to the episode in which Gesar's military adventure in China is recounted,[58] but this episode seems to have been ignored by those researching the Gesar epic in Tibet and China, perhaps for political reasons.

56. *Ibid*, p.239
57. See *Mon gling g.yul 'gyed* (Lhasa, 1980), pp.1-2.
58. *Gesar rgya gling sgrung* or *Nag po rgya gling* (Gangtok, 1977), 527 pp., (*da dgra mtha' nag po rgya la gtad/ rgya nag khrims sgo phye ran thal*, p.21).

In this scheme, it is clear that only the first three of the four adversaries are involved, suggesting that the next major episode, contained in texts such as the *Mon gling*, did not yet exist, but that as the epic continued to develop it acquired many more episodes and the adversary, Mon, then seems to have been added to make up the four. But in the process some confusion has resulted. This is evident in the way in which the author of the article which was commented on above, wavers even between the directions in which Yar-khams, Hor and 'Jang should be located. He places them as follows:

1. The country of the demon in the west
2. Hor in the east
3. 'Jang in the north
4. Mon in the south (p.9)

This is quite simply impossible, though we have to allow that there is a certain amount of illogicality in sources such as the *lHa gling* concerning Klu-btsan, demon of the west but who lives in the north. 'Jang, on the other hand, simply cannot be in the north or anywhere but in the south. It is strange that the author of the article should have run into this geographical confusion. He clearly follows the version of the four which contains both 'Jang and Mon so that he is obliged to put 'Jang in the north which in turn makes him locate the country of the demon in the west. There may have been an element of political expediency in leaving out China as an enemy of Gling and accepting Mon instead, but the resulting arrangement is obviously unsatisfactory.

In conclusion, there is definitely a correct sequence of episodes in the Gesar epic even though, in oral tradition, a bard might tell any part of the story in any order he wishes, and a reader of the epic texts might choose to read whichever part he pleases first. It has been reported there existed more or less a set of the epic story as a whole consisting of the *lHa gling*, *'Khrungs skor, rTa rgyug*, the four major episodes and the eighteen minor ones. The list of these last differs from one version to another, but they are essentially the same.

The writers of the Gesar epic have chosen and can still choose an individual theme from any of the episodes centering upon the exploits of one or two characters in the epic, and so we find many different short chapters such as the 20 titles listed earlier in this paper which are not connected with the main corpus, but are concerned with adventures for the most part undertaken by various knights.

The three chapters in the Alexandra David-Neel collection in Musée Guimet on which our team of scholars has been working in Paris for the last few years belongs to a similar category,[59] but the protagonist

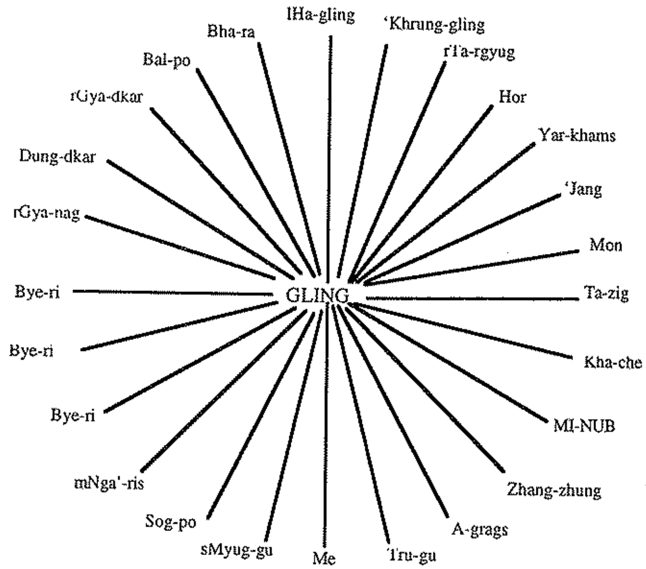
59. They are *sMan lis*, *Tshe lis* and *Hor lis* and belong to a large work of many more chapters, but the three named are the only ones to have reached Paris. The author of these chapters is dMar-rong dBang-chen nyi-ma, a Bonpo layman and the chief of the dMar-rong region in Khams who lived around the beginning of this century. The



in these chapters is the hero himself. The author of these chapters has chosen the themes he wished to elaborate on in his own way, often in a condensed form, but always within the context of the epic itself. This brings us back to R. A. Stein's observation that the Tibetan epic literature is still expanding. We may therefore conclude that there will never be an end to its elaboration so long as there is Tibetan culture. A good example of this is the chapter *'Jar gling g.yul 'gyed*, an episode of Gesar set in Phyi-gling 'Jar, probably Hitler's Germany[60] and the voluminous *Ti dkar* which is concerned with the hero's exploits in a country called Ti-dkar whose king is a *mu stegs pa* (*tīrthika*).[61]

A living epic tradition is indeed a remarkable phenomenon, and provides scholars with an engrossing object of research. But the result is that an already very tangled web of material is constantly growing in complexity. The basic structure outlined above shows that this tangle at least has its origins in a systematic principle.

Fig. VIII: Episodes according to the 'chronological order' clockwise direction




French translation of these chapters is now complete and it is hoped that it will be published in the near future.

60. Written by Chos-kyi blo-gros *alias* Don-rgyud nyi-ma, the eighth Khams-sprul (b. 1931), (Lhasa, 1983), 448 pp. His other works on Gesar are: *U yan gling*, (Palampur, H.P., 1974, Vol.I, 659 pp.; Vol.II, 512 pp.) For other similar recent works see also Karma rang-byung phrin-las (Kalu Rinpoche), *dBus 'chi bdag cham la phab pa* (Bir, 1975, Vol.I, 870 pp.; Vol. II to appear).

61. Written by Kha-tsha pra-pa Ngag-dbang blo-bzang from Ri-bo-che in Amdo (Lhasa, Vol.I, 1987, 411 pp.; Vol.II, 1986, 761 pp.; Vol.III, 1989, 533 pp.); *Bhe gling g.yul 'gyed*, another recent work is by sNam-snang rdo-rje (Xining, 1989, 386 pp.).

# The Social Organization of Gling and the Term *phu nu* in the Gesar Epic[1]

In recent studies of the Tibetan epic, much effort has been spent on analysing the origins and types of material that make up the epic literature, but no study presents an overall view of Gling society. In the paper I gave at the second Symposium on the Epic of King Gesar at Lhasa in 1991, I therefore discussed the theoretical basis upon which the whole of Tibetan epic literature is built. I demonstrated that the Tibetan epic reveals a basic principle as well as a 'chronological order' in its development. Without this theoretical basis, Tibetan epic literature appears as a tangled web of material which is moreover still growing in complexity.[2]

In the present article, I shall deal with another aspect of this epic literature: the social organization of the society as expressed through the concept of *phu nu*. In order to understand the significance of the whole body of material, we must know what kind of society is being represented in it, on what basis that society is organized and to what extent Tibetan traditional society is reflected in the epic. Is this society clanic (*rus*) or tribal (*tsho*) or both? Is it merely a static society with a unique hero? The epic undoubtedly reflects Tibetan society and its social organization at a given period, but at what level of development, clanic, ethnic or national, can we take Tibetan epic literature as a basis for identity.

In the epic, King Gesar, the hero, has celestial parents up in heaven as well as others in the subterranean world, but he is born as a man into a terrestrial family on earth. It is this family which plays a major role in the social and political life of the society in Gling over which he rules. The hero is, of course, often idealised as an edifying Buddhist figure. This presentation of him is more noticeable in some episodes than in others especially when the author of the episode is explicitly a Buddhist, but this does not prevent the epic from making him an ideal Tibetan layman who upholds the honour of his ancestral lineage and observes other social norms such as patriotism, bravery, fame, shame, treachery, treason, and above all leadership in the society. It is for this very reason that the Tibetan Buddhist clergy in general have often disapproved the epic and reserved no place for its literature within their own communities, monastic or otherwise.

Gling society is made up of various tribes (*tsho ba*). How these tribes collaborate with each other, in alliances or by marriages with their tribal chiefs as distinct from their king, Gesar, will also be discussed as will their place in the social hierarchy and their political status.

## 1. The celestial family

Like the first Tibetan king, gNya'-khri btsan-po, Gesar also descends from heaven to earth, but the parallelism in the two myths is not complete: gNya'-khri btsan-po reigns as a descendant from heaven,[3] whereas Gesar is born as a man. In heaven, Gesar's father is Tshangs-pa dkar-po and his mother 'Bum-skyong. There are other members in the family, including an aunt called Ma Ne-ne. The father is identified with Brahma; the aunt is known by different names and has various functions as a goddess in both the Bonpo and Buddhist legends. These two - the father and the aunt - play a very important role in Gesar's life on earth. The father often appears in Gesar's visions and gives him advice, while the aunt's intervention in his life is literally incessant: she constantly appears in his visions and dreams, telling him what he must and what he must not do. Tshangs-pa and Ma ne-ne are presumbly brother and sister (she is not the sister of 'Bum-skyong), but this is never made explicit. Other members of the celestial family do not have specific functions apart from being evoked occasionally by name at the beginning of particular songs.

## 2. The terrestrial family

Seng-blon has three sons, Gesar being the second, (Fig.3, iii) by three wives. He has no daughters. Gesar has another father on earth, a *gnyan*, i.e. a mountain spirit named Ger-mdzo. One of the early Yarlung kings also had as father a *gnyan*. It is a very common among the population in Amdo when a man becomes politically powerful and prestigious he is regarded as the son of the local mountain deity and there is a special term for this: *gnyan bu* the 'son of a *gnyan*'.[4]

## 3. The subterranean family

'Gog-bza', Gesar's mother, is regarded as a daughter of Klu gTsug-na, an aquatic spirit in the subterranean world.

1. This article was presented as a paper at the third International Symposium of the Epic of King Gesar, organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Gesar Insitute of Inner Mongolia and held in Xilinhot, Inner Mongolia, 22-26 July 1993. I have simply indicated the texts published by Kan s'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang as Lanzhou, mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang as Xining, Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang as Chengdu.
2. Article No.27.

3. Article No.18.
4. *Cf. LShDz* (Karmay, 1972: 69-70).

## The social organization of Gling

Tibetan society has often been stigmatized for its practice of polyandry, especially by foreign travellers. It is true that polyandry was quite common, but it was by no means the only prevailing custom.[5] In the epic literature, on the contrary, the kinship system is based entirely on polygyny and quite often also on monogamy as we shall see shortly. No instance of polyandry has so far been found in the epic which might suggest that in that context, it is not considered an ideal basis for the human family unit.

Fig. 1: *rTa rgyug dpyid nyi*, 6

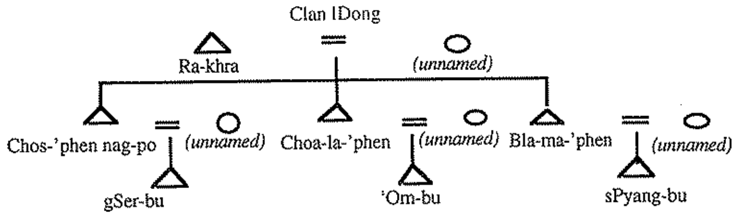
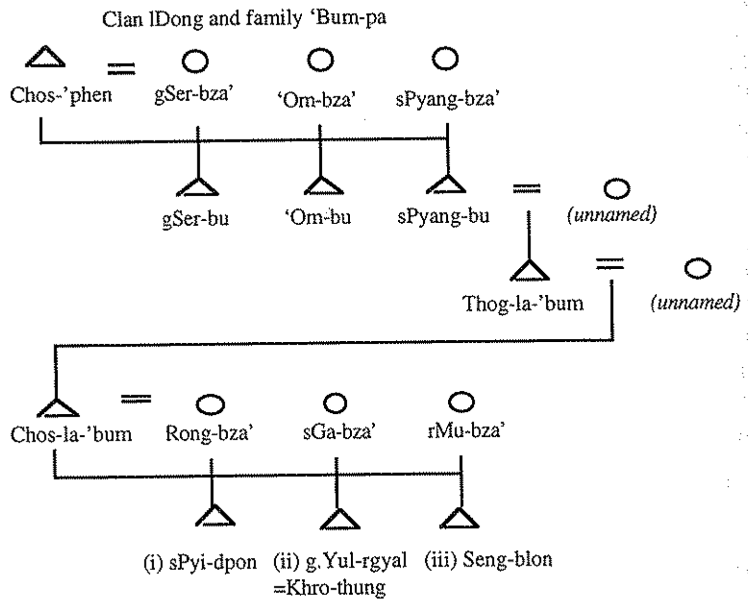


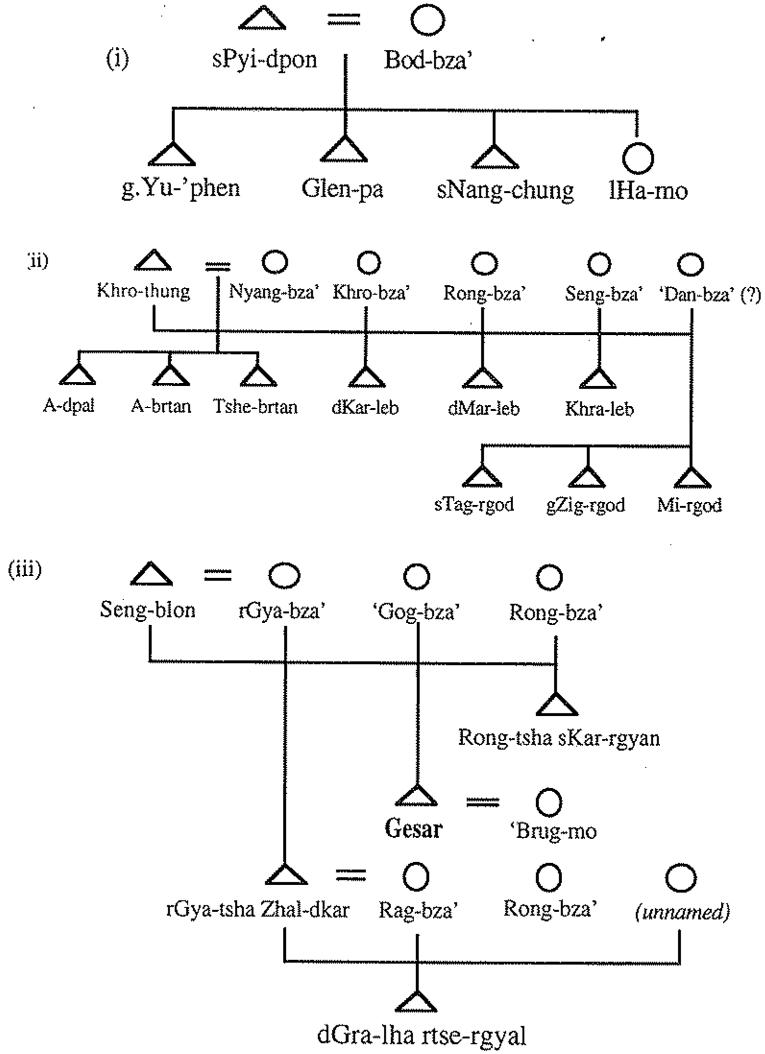

Fig.2: *'Khrungs skor*, 5.




5. On this theme, see Levine, 1988.



Fig.3: *'Khrungs skor*, 5




Gesar's earliest named ancestor Ra-khra has three sons, all by the same mother (Fig.1).[6] She is his only wife, but his father, Seng-blon, has three women: Gesar is born to the second, a woman from the 'Gog clan (*rus*), who is hence called 'Gog-bza'. The first woman bears a son to Seng-blon called rGya-tsha Zhal-dkar. The third woman, a woman from

6. *Cf. lHa gling gab tse dgu skor*, Lanzhou, 1982, p.94 (Stein, 1956: 197).

the Rong clan, bears a son called Rong-tsha sKar-rgyan. Gesar himself has only one wife, but has a number of women friends described as 'cooks' (*ja ma*).[7] His elder half-brother has three wives (Fig.3, iii).

From the story of the conflict between 'Gog and Gling, we know that 'Gog was invaded by Gling[8] and that 'Gog-bza', Gesar's mother, was taken by force, thus reflecting the custom of marriage by capture still practised in Amdo until very recent times. She then became a *ja ma* in the family of 'Bum-pa. sKya-lo, the tribe from which Gesar's wife, 'Brug-mo, comes is regarded as not being in Gling. In Gling society the most important clan is the lDong, the clan which has precedence over every other clan and social unit in all social and political matters. It is into this clan that Gesar is born and in his time it is represented by three brothers, each with his own family (Fig.3, i-iii).

sPyi-dpon Khra-rgan, the elder brother: he is depicted as the wisest man of Gling, he who knows the entire genealogical history of the clan. He has three sons by one woman (Fig.3, i). All three sons serve as knights (*dpa' thul*) of Gesar. The third is killed in the campaign against the Hor.

Khro-thung, the second brother: he is the father of nine sons by five different women, one of whom is a woman from the 'Dan tribe (Fig.3, ii). His nine sons serve as knights of Gling. Khro-thung is the adversary of his cousin, Gesar. He is depicted as a cunning rogue and poltroon. Nevertheless, he is an important character in the epic and figures in various legends.When he was a baby, his mother was unable to give him enough milk herself, so he was nourished at the breasts of a female yak, a she goat, and a bitch, hence his epithet of Ma-bzhi (Four Mothers).[9] He is depicted as a great talker, but nobody believes what he says. He was, in the past, an important leader of Gling, but was ousted and continues to dream of being the king of Gling. He plots to undermine his younger brother, Seng-blon, the true ruler. By various signs he prophesizes that Gesar will be born to Seng-blon and that he will never have a chance of becoming king. Later he secretly covets 'Brug-mo, his cousin's future wife. When Gling is in conflict with one of its enemies, he is often suspected of treason.

7. *rTa rgyugs dpyid kyi nyi ma* (hereafter *dPyi nyi* ), Xining, 1981, p.10.
8. *Gling ge sar rgyal po'i sgrung 'khrungs skor* (hereafter *'Khrungs skor*), Lanzhou, 1981, p.17. This text, under the title of *'Khrungs gling*, is studied by Stein (1956: 221); *dPyid nyi*, pp.10, 46.
9. *Cf. Shan 'dan stag seng kha sprod* (hereafter *Shan 'dan*), Chengdu, 1982, p.15; *Bod rgya shan sbyar gyi ge sar tshig mdzod* (herefater *Gesar tshig mdzod*), Chengdu, 1989, p.41.



Seng-blon, the third brother: he is the reigning king of Gling whom Gesar succeeds. He is depicted as a person of mild character and Khro-thung exploits his weakness. However, Seng-blon is the father of three sons by different women (Fig.3, iii). In Tibetan society, the second brother, more than the other brothers, often tends to assume responsibility for the family. So, in the epic, both Khro-thung, the uncle, and Gesar, the cousin, are depicted as the second of three brothers, a kinship feature more emphasized to date in the epic of other societies, for instance, in the epic of Buryatia.[10]

The lDong clan in the Tibetan epic therefore exemplifies the basic kinship system around which the social and political organization of Gling society revolves. It is founded on patrilineal descent through the transmission of the bone substance of the father as is in all populations of Tibetan culture. Great stress is often laid on the *prima* of the kin (*pha khu, pha tshan, sras dbon*) rather than on affines (*ma zhang, ma tshan, lcam sras*), but the affines are regarded as no less important, from the standpoint of the socio-cultural context, as we shall see.

The Gling people therefore identify themselves through the intermediary of an origin myth of the lDong clan:

Ra-khra rgan-po has three grand-sons (Fig.1).

Each one is married to one of the three daughters of the mountain deity rMa-chen sPom-ra.[11] One day, Ra-khra tells his grand-daughters-in-law to go to rMa and bring back whatever each one finds. The elder goes to the highlands in rMa and finds a golden yoke, a span in length; the second goes to the middle lands and finds a handful of tamarisk bush; and the third goes to the lowelands and finds the tail of a wolf. So the descendants of these women are called respectively gSer-ba (the Gold), 'Om-bu (the Tamarisk) and Mu-spyang (the Wolf). The descendants of the first couple occupy the highlands of Gling, those of the second the middle lands and those of the third the lowlands.[12]

The myth also tells that the grand-father of the three brothers is killed by wolves and the corpse is buried on the Mount A-myes rMa-chen. That is why, it explains, the land of Gling is so prosperous and full of brave men. I am unable to interpret the significance of this part of the myth's content: Gesar does, of course, discover a great armoury on the mountain along with other things, but this brings no closer to understanding the connexion between the corpse and the armoury and Gling's prosperity.

10. *Cf.* R. Hamayon, 1985: 373-409.
11. In *'Khrungs skor* (p.5), these three women, however, appear as wives of one man, *Cf.* Fig.2.
12. *dPyid nyi*, pp.6-7.

On the other hand, the myth not only provides an explanation for the matrimonial alliance between Gling and rMa in the epic but also throws light on the socio-cultural context, in which women play a significant part. In the myth, it is the women who provide the names for their offspring, but the offspring, nevertheless, remain within the lDong clan: that is, they identify themselves by patrilineal descent. The lineage of the three brothers constitutes the basis of the primitive clan structure of Gling from which branches all other clan groups in Gling descend. The three also represent the senior, middle and junior patrilineal lines of descent respectively (*che rgyud, 'bring rgyud, chung rgyud*, Fig. 3, i-iii).

In real geographical terms, the land of Gling (Gling-yul) is situated in Khams, to the west of the rivers rDza-chu (Mekong) whereas the land of rMa (rMa-yul) is in Amdo, to the north-east of the river. The centre of rMa (rMa-sked), which is generally known as 'Go-log, is dominated by the snow mountain A-myes rMa-chen. The distance between Gling and rMa is therefore considerable, but this has not prevented the myth from envisaging an association of the two regions in the epic. The deity of A-myes rMa-chen is the protective deity of the lDong clan as well as their wife-giver. In my opinion, 'Gog-bza', Gesar's mother, comes from there as do the other women in the myth. The clan name 'Gog is probably connected with the toponymy of mGo-log. The land of rMa is also where Gesar and his mother are banished. In many episodes, Gling and rMa are represented as if they were one and the same place.[13]

As was said above, in the terrestial world, Gesar has a *gnyan* as father, that is, a mountain spirit represented by Mount Ger-mdzo which, being on the father's side, is situated in the Shar-zla region on the side of Gling and not in rMa; and his human mother is regarded as an embodiment of a water spirit of the lakes. In accounts of the genealogy of the hero, this concept is often expressed in the following manner: "the lineage of the father is from a mountain and that of the mother from a lake."[14] This notion of the mountain as male and the lake as female is further expressed in popular rituals particularly in Amdo where it is only men who propitiate the mountain spirits up in the mountains and only women who propitiate water spirits down in the valleys.[15] The mountain spirits are often regarded as male and the *klu* as female in the local beliefs. (When the word *klu* is used to translate the Sanskrit term *nāga* in the Indian Buddhist texts, we find not only the Indian notion of male *klu* but of a caste-system of the *klu* as well.)

The epic envisages Gling society in its early stage as composed of six tribes (*gling tsho drug*). They are linked together by the concept of

13. E.g. *Shan 'dan*, pp.5-7, 10, 157, 161-62, 166-67.
14. *yab rgyud ni ri nas chad pa, yum rgyid mtsho nas chad pa* (*dPyid nyi*, p.4).
15. *Cf.* Karmay, Sagant, 1987: 247-50.



*phu nu* to which we shall return below. As for the identification of the six, to my knowledge, it is never very clearly stated precisely which tribes are meant. Like the number three, the number six enjoys great popularity in the epic. There are often only three brothers in the epic's pedigrees. Tibet's primitive clans are also six in number. In reality, the tribes that are enumerated as under the domination of Gling are always many more than six: the numbers of these tribes as well as their names, vary in different episodes. In one episode, the six tribes are given as follows:

1. 'Bum-pa
2. 'Dan-ma
3. sTag-rong
4. rGya
5. sKya-lo
6. 'Bru ('Gru)[16]

These six tribes constitute the core of Gling social organization. 'Bum-pa is the name of the family into which Gesar is born and whose clan is lDong. The lineages of this clan, which are represented by the three brothers mentioned above, constitute the upper social stratum of Gling society; but not all the three brothers use the name 'Bum-pa.

'Dan-ma is the name of a region in Khams and in the epic, it is made subject to Gling after a conflict between them; a series of ministers of the ruling house of Gling is provided through a marriage alliance and, in Gesar's time, a knight of the same name - 'Dan-ma - becomes one of his ministers. His name is therefore often preceded by the word *tsha zhang*, 'nephew and maternal uncle'.[17]

sTag-rong, too, is the name of a region which becomes attached to Gling after a conflict beween the two.[18] Khro-thung is then appointed governor of this region, hence sTag-rong Khro-thung.

The tribe rGya, however, is not known at all. There does not seem to be anything about it in the epic which gives only the name of a person of this tribe. Certainly rGya as a tribal name occurs only in this episode and in this list.

sKya-lo is a tribe whose location, as in the case of sTag-rong, is distinct from that of Gling. In certain episodes sKya-lo seems to be situated in rMa.[19] Gesar's wife comes from one of the families of this tribe called sGa, hence sGa-bza' 'Brug-mo.

The connexion of the tribe 'Bru ('Gru) with Gling is not explicit, but it is represented by a tantric magician who is one of the 30 knights.

16. *'Khrungs skor*,1981, p.143-44 (Stein, 1956: 265).
17. *Shan 'dan*, pp.144, 149; *Gesar tshig mdzod*, p.223-24.
18. *Cf. ibid*, p.41.
19. *dPyi nyi*, p.9-10.

This rough sketch gives some idea how the epic represents Gling social and political structure. It is clear from this list that only the 'Bum-pa are members of the Gling élite class. Gling itself is divided into three regions. Each region has its subdivisons, but in theory all the social strata of Gling belong to the same clan lDong, as is envisaged in the myth discussed above.

Under Gling rule, there are therefore five tribes, two of which are presented as having been annexed after a war and these 'non-Gling' tribes are not only vassals, but form marriage alliances with Gling. The three women of the origin myth come from rMa, and Gesar's mother also comes from another land. The myth depicts a Gling society as practising exogamy. However, when the six tribes are listed, a number of the clan names indicate that endogamy is prevalent: for instance, the sKya-lo, one of the six tribes, provided Gesar's wife.

In the epic, the mode of livelihood in Gling is presented as that of an agro-nomadic society as is in fact the case today for many of the people in Khams and Amdo. The epic boasts of the people of Gling keeping herds up in the mountains, and houses, castles and farmlands down in the valleys, but the predominant aspect of Gling society is nevertheless nomadic pastoralism. References to numerous tent-dwellings and changing camps recur constantly.

Gesar, the king of Gling, is served by 30 knights who are mostly from Gling itself, but some are chiefs of the five tribes. Some of these, 'Dan-ma, for example, are ministers, while others are military chiefs leading the army of their own tribe under the overall command of Gesar. In the course of Gling's expansion, the epic recounts the growth of an empire and military conflicts become a recurring theme. Many of the 30 knights die heroic deaths in action and are replaced by men from the newly conquered people to maintain the earlier chain of command.[20]

All this social and political movement in Gling is organized, determined and regulated through the concept of *phu nu*. The concept is therefore the base of the development in the beginning, at the tribal stage, but it inevitably becomes difficult to maintain as Gling gradually becomes an empire and extends its territorial possessions in different parts of Asia.

### The concept of *phu nu*

To belong to the *phu nu* is an indication of a certain social status: and those who belong to it have the right to ranks and other social claims. A man from each of the six tribes is sent to invite back the young Jo-ru (Gesar's childhood name) to Gling from the land of rMa to which he has

20. *Hor lis*, f.214, manuscript in the David-Neel Collection, Musée Guimet, Paris.



been banished. These six men are described as being the six *phu nu*.[21] Therefore the expression *phu nu* is applied not only to the members of Gling society itself who are all members of the same clan, lDong, but also to the people of the annexed tribes who belong to clans other than those of Gling. These are connected with Gling only through their marriage alliances.

*Phu nu* is the term by which the social organization is determined and by which its coherence is expressed. *Phu nu* means literally the 'elder and younger brothers', but in the kinship terminology employed in the epic it is applied to a very wide circle of relatives. At an early stage, *phu nu* membership is confined only to members of certain lineage groups. Whatever the reasons or motivations for this, solidarity within the *phu nu* is depicted as absolute. It is only members of the *phu nu* who can attend certain meetings and take part in particular rites. This *phu nu* organization is marked by three paradigms: solidarity, commensality and equality in status. These are expressed in four lines in a poetic oration delivered by sPyi-dpon, the doyen of Gling society on the occasion of the birth of his cousin and Gesar's half brother rGya-tsha:

"From the time of Chos-'phen nag-po, (Fig.1)
If an enemy appears we hold spears together,
We eat food together from the same plate,
We sit together on the same seat."[22]

This solidarity of among members of the same clan is enhanced by the concept of their belonging to the 'same bone of the father', this being emphatically stressed in the same speech:

'In Gling there are three lineages, the great, the medium and the small,
They are not distinguished by high or low ranks...,
Because they all have the same bone of the father.'[23]

This fraternal bond is regulated through two social imperatives, moral and jural: before Jo-ru becomes king, the power to rule over the kingdom is loosely shared by the three brothers who are Gesar's father, the designated king, and his two paternal uncles (*pha khu, pha tshan*, Fig. 3, i-iii). Khro-thung, one of the paternal uncles, knows by instinct that Gesar, his obstreperous cousin, is a potential threat to his own secret

21. *phu nu mi drug* ('*Khrungs skor*, p.144; Stein, 1956: 265).
22. *gling chos 'phan nag po tshun chad nas/ dgra byung na mdung mo mnyam'dzin yin/ zas sder nang gcig tu mnyam za yin/ skyid gdan thog gcig tu mnyam 'dug yin/* ('*Khrungs skor*, p.7; Stein, 1956: 218).
23. *thob go sa'i che chung ma yin te/...de phyin pha rus gcig pa yin/* ('*Khrungs skor*, p.9; Stein 1956: 219).

ambition. He contrives two ways of getting rid of his cousin. He questions the legitimacy of Jo-ru's belonging to the *phu nu* because Jo-ru's mother 'Gog-bza' is a servant and not a lawful wife of Seng-blon. Khro-thung then accuses the young Jo-ru of the theft of a calf, a foal and a lamp from his people. Jo-ru is also accused of murdering three hunters from the same group. He is therefore banished according to the law of Gling, together with his mother, to the Land of rMa, because he has violated the law between *phu nu,* an unpardonable action and his mother is not a lawful wife.[24] From this conflict between the paternal uncle and the cousin (*khu tsha, khu tshan*), - a common theme in Tibetan stories (one thinks of Milarepa and his uncle) - it is clear that Khro-thung endeavours to exclude Jo-ru from the *phu nu,* first by questioning the legitimacy of his birth and then accusing him of theft and murder. Both such actions would have the effect of disqualifying him from membership of the *phu nu*. In the conflict, uncle and cousin come close to murdering each other, but both know that such an act, which is termed 'pollution from within' or 'fratricide' (*nang dme*), would cause the disintegration of the *phu nu*. The notion of 'pollution from within', which occurs only when a murder has taken place within the *phu nu*, is an important jural factor in maintaining the solidarity of the *phu nu*.[25] This idea is further illustrated by the great feud between 'Dan-ma and Shan-pa. The latter is a military commander of the Hor who is taken prisoner after the conquest of Hor. In a dreadful fight with spears Shan-pa manages to kill rGya-tsha. However, Gesar intends to admit him into the *phu nu* in spite of the killing of his half-brother and appoint him as a minister of Gling. In the eyes of 'Dan-ma Gesar is confused concerning the distinction between those who are outside the *phu nu* and those who are within it. He rebels against Gesar and declares: "I am going to sever the *phu nu* connexion between us."[26] From this context, we understand that not only are blood relatives members of the *phu nu*, but also those who are connected with Gling through marriage. In fact, all the 30 knights of Gling are considered as being *phu nu*.[27]

Another element which characterizes the *phu nu* is the importance of *snying nye*, lit. 'close to heart', meaning loyalty towards one another. However, the most important factor which binds the members of the *phu nu* together in the face of external agression is the idea of *mgo 'phang*, the 'height at which the head is held, meaning honour. It is this last

24. *'Khrungs skor*, pp.104-5 (Stein, 1956: 250-55).
25. In this context the following terms are often used: *khu tshan nang 'gal*, 'conflict between uncle and cousin'; *phu nu nang dme*, 'murder within kinsmen'. *Cf. Shan 'dan*, p.141.
26. *phu nu 'grel thag bcad le yin/* (*Shan 'dan*, p. 137)*; Hor lis*, f. 5a.
27. *phu nu sum cu* (*'Khrungs skor*, p. 155; Stein 1956: 81).



which is shamed most when 'Brug-mo, Gesar's wife, is taken by force by the Hor, and Me-bza', Gesar's other favourite, is abducted by Klu-btsan, the Demon of the North. The recapture of the two women restores the honour of Gling and ultimately leads also to the conquest of the two enemies.

Let us now examine more closely the meaning of the term *phu nu*. As we have seen, at an early stage in the epic, *phu nu* designates a restricted group of people within Gling, bound together by the fact that they are of the 'same bone of the father'. In other words, consanguinity is emphasized. However, the term gradually comes to be applied to those who are linked not only by the patrilineal descent but also by affinity. The use of this term has therefore gone through different stages in the epic.

The term is translated in various ways in Western works on Tibet. In the *'Khrung gling*, R. A. Stein translates it by 'frères' ('brothers'), but he also states that it in fact refers to a class of young people and he emphasizes that it is not about blood relationship.[28] However, in the epic the term is applied not only to the young but also to the older generation, as we know from the fact that all the 30 knights are regarded as *phu nu* including sPyi-dpon, the elderly doyen of Gling society. *Phu nu* is, of course, a contraction of *phu bo* and *nu bo*, 'elder' and 'younger brother', but it does not have the same connotation in every context in which it occurs. For example, R. A. Stein translates the line: *phu nu nang dme yong dogs* as "Ainsi il y aura souillure d'homicide entre frères cadets et aînés,"[29] but in this context, it is not a question of problems between brothers but between uncle and cousin. Again he translates the line: *phu nu nang dme mi gtong ba'i nges pa mi 'dug* as "Il n'est pas certain que tu ne sèmeras pas la souillure interne (la guerre civile) entre les 'frères'."[30] Here, too, the text is concerned with the conflict between Khro-thung and Gesar: they are not brothers, and in the epic Khro-thung is an old man. In this last context Stein uses 'frères' in a figurative sense.

In a slightly different form the term occurs in early Tibetan texts from Dunhuang: *pu ma nu* which J. Bacot translates by 'enfants'. This seems to be the only place where this variant of the term occurs. It certainly does not mean 'children'; in my opinion, it simply means 'relatives'. In the same passage of the document the form *pu nu* also occurs, but this is not translated by Bacot. The passage in question is

28. "...il ne s'agit pas de liens de parenté par le sang." (1956: 40, n.2).
29. *'Khrungs skor*, p.93; Stein, 1956: 246.
30. *'Khrungs skor*, p.98; Stein, 1956: 64, 248.

concerned with some *phu nu* who are being disloyal (*pu nu snying rings pa*).[31]

However, the earliest dated source for the term is the inscription of Zhol rDo-ring erected *c.* A.D. 764 at Lhasa. In this inscription the term *pu nu po*, not just *phu nu*, occurs twice in contexts where the concern is the nearest kin to whom the property of a family is to be given should the line of descendants of that family becomes extinct. In these two passages, H. Richardson translates it by 'kin' and 'kinsmen'.[32] This is certainly correct: as pointed out above the term in early times, had this connotation of 'kinsman'.

The form of *pu nu po* is corroborated by its occurrence with the gender change, *phu nu mo*. It is entered in the ninth century Sanskrit-Tibetan dictionary with the form of *phu nu mo'i sru*, to translate the Sanskrit term *bhaginī*, 'sister', 'maternal aunt'.[33]

## Conclusion

As stated above, the term *phu nu* occurs frequently in the episode of *'Khrung gling* - when giving accounts of the society - with the meaning of 'kinsman', but, as Gling expands, different tribes appear and become an integrated part of Gling society. The term *phu nu* then covers the new members of the alliance. It brings together both sides: filiation and alliance. The term has therefore the meaning of a very wide circle of relatives covering not only male or female members of a clan, but affines as well.

After the conquest of Yar-khams and the land of Hor, a new development begins and introduces a change in the social structure of Gling society. A-stag lHa-mo, a sister of the great Demon of the North, is appointed as the governor of Yar-khams. In the hierarchy, she is raised to knightly rank with ministerial status, and is the only woman among the 30 knights. In the same way, two chiefs of the Hor, Thang-rtse and Shan-pa, are also given knightly status, although Shan-pa, as we have seen, is the killer of rGya-tsha, the half brother of Gesar. Still others among the 30 knights, who are killed, are also replaced by various 'non-Gling people'. From this point on the *phu nu* organization of the tribal stage in the epic breaks down and the epic is now concerned with supra-clanic organization and the word *phu nu* is less often used, but great concern is shown for the patrilineal descent of the 'Bum-pa family and for the throne of Gling. Yul-lha of 'Jang, another important character, who joins Gling society after the conquest of 'Jang, participates in the campaign against the Mon as do A-stag, Thang-rtse and Shan-pa. Through the admission of these 'non-Gling people' to the circle of knights in the service of the king, the epic is no longer portraying a clan or a tribal society at its local level but a kingdom with many vassals and with a chief now styled as a universal monarch. The idea of *phu nu* organization, however, lingers on, but in a different form. When the Gling people reject the proposal to appoint Shan-pa as a minister, Gesar indicates that although Shan-pa does not belong to the *phu nu* of Gling he was related to Gesar in heaven in a previous age and that is why he refuses the request and forbids others to kill him, for that would amount to committing 'pollution from within' (*nang dme*).[34]

It should be clear from what I have said that no consideration of the Gesar material can dispense with an awareness of *phu nu* and the subtle, elusive, but deep-rooted and influential principles which determined its use.

31. Bacot *et al*, 1940: 110, 146. This same document also attests the existence of the term *phu ma nu* which Bacot translates as 'garçons ou filles'. In my opinion, it simply means 'kinsman'.
32. Richardson, 1985: 20, 24
33. Sakaki, 1916-26.

34. *sMan lis*, manuscript in the David-Néel Collection, Musée Guimet, f.164,169, 174,181 (see note 20); *Shan 'dan*, pp.180-81.

# PART VI

# Tibet: Reunification and Disintegration

# The Fifth Dalai Lama and his Reunification of Tibet



*Plate 47: The Fifth Dalai Lala, Potala (SGK 1995)*

At the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama's birth, Tibet was in a state of religious, social and political turmoil. Political power was shared among various factions supported by different religious schools who not only wished to propagate their teachings, but also to establish their economic power and political influence. In Tibet, religious, political and economic power have always been closely entwined. Tibetan political theory is based on the coalition of politics and religion in the form of Lamaism, finding its expression in the *mchod yon,* 'preceptor-patron' relationship in which both parties are considered equal - the preceptor



giving the patron religious teachings and spiritual guidance in return for material and political protection. In addition, political protection allowed the religious schools to increase the number of their disciples and hence their wealth. The term *mchod yon* was often used to designate the relationship between a Tibetan lama and the leader of a foreign country, such as that between 'Phags-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1235-1280), the head of the Sa-skya school, and Kublai Khan, the Mongol emperor in the thirteenth century. An understanding of the interdependence of politics and religion is essential for the study of Tibetan history.

The circumstances and strife surrounding the Fifth Dalai Lama's birth are important to recall in order to understand the decisive role this exceptional man played in the reunification of Tibet.

In 1548, the aristocrat Zhing-zhag Tshe-brtan rdo-rje was appointed governor of the province of gTsang by the ruler of Central Tibet, a Rin-spungs lord and a supporter of the Karma-pa order. The newly appointed governor settled in the palace of bSam-'grub-rtse (also called gZhis-ka-rtse), situated near the dGe-lugs-pa monastery bKra-shis lhun-po. Shortly after, he rebelled against the Rin-spungs lords and proclaimed himself King of gTsang. Together with his nine sons he gradually expanded his kingdom and established control over both dBus and gTsang, the two main provinces of Central Tibet. This was the first time since the collapse of the Tibetan empire in the ninth century that Tibet was ruled by a lay government.

The new government's ambition was to revive the institutions of the imperial period and to bring peace and prosperity to the country by applying a five-point policy, the so-called 'five great actions'. The plan was supported by various religious schools such as the Sa-skya-pa, the Jo-nang-pa, and, more particularly, by the great hierarchs of the Karma bka'-brgyud school. As the legitimate representative of authority, he equally maintained good relations with the dGe-lugs-pa abbots of bKra-shis lhun-po who, however, remained suspicious of the new dynasty's intentions.

Indeed, during the same period the new dGe-lugs-pa school had founded a number of large monasteries in the dBus province, namely 'Bras-spungs, Se-ra and dGa'-ldan near Lhasa, the former imperial capital. The dGe-lugs-pa school, whose monasteries were supported by the laity and a number of nobles of dBus, played a significant role on the religious as well as on the political scene. In 1577-78 the conversion to Buddhism of Altan Khan, the leader of the Tumed Mongols, and all his subjects by bSod-nams rgya-mtsho (1543-1588), the Abbot of 'Bras-spungs (who received the title Dalai Lama from the Khan was and later recognised as the Third) was a spectacular success for the dGe-lugs-pa school. The secular government in bSam-'grub-rtse, however, viewed the event as a

politico-religious alliance between the dGe-lugs-pa school and a foreign power. In fact, it was a struggle between two Buddhist religious schools, in this case, the dGe-lugs-pa and the Karma-pa, to secure the support of a patron without which neither could survive.

In 1589, the conflict was exacerbated when the dGe-lugs-pa recognised a child born that year to a Mongol family as the reincarnation of the Third Dalai Lama. The royal government took this as a clear indication of the dGe-lugs-pa school's intentions. After the child was installed in the palace of dGa'-ldan pho-brang at 'Bras-spungs and enthroned as abbot, Mongol intervention in dGe-lugs-pa, and therefore in Tibetan affairs, increased. Moreover, the new Dalai Lama refused to bless the king of gTsang when they met. He came to be regarded as an expert in magic and was suspected of having performed a magic ritual against the king. However, he died shortly after at 'Bras-spungs in 1616 at the age of twenty-eight, and the royal government forbade the search for his reincarnation.

In 1618, the Mongols and the dGe-lugs-pa monks began to attack the royal officials residing in Lhasa. This escalated into a general conflict between the government's forces and the dGe-lugs-pa monks supported by the Mongols and several nobles of dBus. Fighting continued intermittently until 1621 and led to the establishment in the region of a great number of Mongols determined to protect dGe-lugs-pa interests. In 1621 near Lhasa, a great massacre was averted on both sides due to the intervention of Pan-chen Blo-bzang chos-rgyan (1567-1662), the Abbot of bKra-shis lhun-po (who was later regarded as the First Panchen Lama).

It was against this background of turmoil that in 1617 a son was born to the noble Za-hor family. From about the fourteenth century the family took residence in the sTag-rtse castle, the former stronghold of the Yarlung Kings. The officials of dGa'-ldan pho-brang at 'Bras-spungs had not renounced the search for the Dalai Lama's reincarnation despite the king's ban and the war between dBus and gTsang.

They had secretly discovered and selected three children liable to be the Dalai Lama's reincarnation. The child born to the famous Za-hor family seemed the most convincing candidate. The status of the family was evidently a determining factor since two other schools, the 'Brug-pa and the Karma-pa, sought to claim the child as the reincarnation of one of their lamas who had also died in 1616. The family had resisted their demands despite the father's friendly relations with the 'Brug-pa school. In addition, the mother was connected to the Jo-nang-pa school through her family who was established at the castle of sNa-dkar-rtse. Both the mother's and the son's names, Kun-dga' lha-mdzes and Kun-dga' 'gyur-med, betray this link. We may therefore assume that the Jo-nang-pa school equally hoped to win the child over to their cause. This, however, was not to be the case, as we shall see.



The first six years of the Fifth Dalai Lama's life resemble a novel. In 1618, his father, bDud-'dul rab-brtan, was involved in a plot against the royal government, which brought upon him the king's wrath. Around the same period, the dGe-lugs-pa, as already mentioned, secretly chose his son as the reincarnation of the Fourth Dalai Lama after the three candidates drew lots before the holy image of the Rva-sgreng monastery. In the meantime, Pan-chen Blo-bzang chos-rgyan had convinced the king to lift the ban on the quest for the new incarnation.

Nevertheless, the king ordered the Za-hor family to leave their castle at sTag-rtse. bDud-'dul rab-brtan had attempted to escape to Eastern Tibet but was prevented by royal envoys and brought to court at bSam-'grub-rtse where he remained under arrest until his death in 1626, without ever seeing his son again. His wife and son (aged three) were forced to remain in bDe-skyid-gling, then in lHa-gzhong. Due to the insecurity caused by the war, the king suggested they come to live at court in bSam-'grub-rtse. But the mother, suspicious of the king's real intentions, preferred to ignore his request and return to her family at the sNa-dkar-rtse castle. As soon as the ban on the quest for the reincarnation was lifted, the palace of dGa'-ldan pho-brang sent envoys accompanied by Mongol delegates to the king's court, under the cover of a diplomatic mission sent by Pan-chen Blo-bzang chos-rgyan, to request the official recognition of the boy now living at sNa-dkar-rtse as the Fourth Dalai Lama's reincarnation.

The child spent the first six years of his life in this castle and, in order to verify the authenticity of the reincarnation, was subjected to the traditional 'tests' bearing on his 'memories' of his previous life. The best known among these 'tests' consists in presenting the candidate with objects belonging to the previous incarnation along with other identical objects. If the child chooses the real objects he is proclaimed *sprul sku*, 'reincarnate'. However, contrary to tradition, the boy belonging to the Za-hor family had already been chosen by the drawing of lots before being submitted to the traditional tests.

One of the other two candidates, Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, was recognised as the reincarnation of another dGe-lugs-pa hierarch of 'Bras-spungs. He was installed in the 'Upper Chamber' and was to become a redoutable rival of the Fifth Dalai Lama, as we shall see.

The Fifth Dalai Lama retained bitter memories of his childhood during which the philosophical and religious precepts relative to the notion of reincarnation served political purposes. In his writings he would often recall with irony the political manipulations of his own school which involved the Mongols in all its affairs. Thus he wrote in his autobiography, the *Dukula*:

Since there was a large Mongol army in the country and the Tibetan leaders were forced to yield much of their land to them, it became customary to recognise the sons of Mongol leaders as reincarnations. It was said that I too was one (even though I was not a Mongol)!

As for his success at passing the traditional 'tests', he is equally as straightforward:

The official Tsha-ba bka'-bcu of dGa'-ldan pho-brang showed me statues and rosaries (that belonged to the Fourth Dalai Lama and other people), but I was unable to distinguish between them! When he left the room I heard him tell the people outside that I had successfully past the tests. Later, when he became my tutor, he would often admonish me and say: 'You must work hard, since you were unable to recognise the objects!'

The child was brought to the palace of dGa'-ldan pho-brang, also known as the 'Lower Chamber'. He was enthroned as the Fifth Dalai Lama and received the name of Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho from Pan-chen Blo-bzang chos-rgyan who became one of his spiritual masters. As soon as he was installed the Mongols wanted him to go to Kokonor. His entourage considered him too young to undertake such a journey, but it soon became obvious that if they refused, the Mongols would take him by force. With the king's permission, the officials of dGa'-ldan pho-brang therefore secretly transferred him to Ri-sgo, in the south. This episode clearly shows that the alliance between the dGe-lugs-pa and the Mongols supported by the nobles of dBus was not without difficulties. The Fifth Dalai Lama was forced to remain in hiding in Ri-sgo for a year. During that time he began to learn how to read and write.

From the age of six to twenty-four, his studies were devoted to traditional subjects such as Buddhist philosophy, Sanskrit and poetry. He developed a keen interest in Buddhist philosophy, the focus of study for the dGe-lugs-pa school, and was later to compose a number of treatises on the subject. At the same time, he also had to perform his duty as abbot of 'Bras-spungs monastery whose throne he occupied. In 1633, he met dKon-mchog lhun-grub, a master of the rNying-ma-pa, whose teachings were not always recognised by the dGe-lugs-pa school. This meeting was to be a turning point in his life: he received teachings and initiations into certain mystical practices and tantric rituals of which he hitherto had no knowledge. The young hierarch realised that his philosophical training at the monastery alone was not sufficient to attain spiritual enlightenment.



In the meantime, the reincarnation of the 'Upper Chamber', Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, had won fame both in Tibet and in Mongolia as a brilliant scholar and spiritually accomplished person. This aroused envy in the Dalai Lama's entourage even though Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan had always proclaimed himself a disciple of the Fifth Dalai Lama. This situation was to have an unsettling effect on the harmony within the monastery.

Due to Pan-chen Blo-bzang chos-rgyan's diplomacy, the king and his government had ceased hostilities against the dGe-lugs-pa from the moment of the Fifth Dalai Lama's enthronement. The dGe-lugs-pa community of gTsang, however, felt threatened by the establishment of a Karma-pa monastery near bKra-shis lhun-po. Because of this, Mongol intervention on the Tibetan political scene was again to endanger the precarious balance of Tibetan politics.

bSod-nams chos-'phel (1595-1657), the treasurer of dGa'-ldan pho-brang, was the prime architect of the dGe-lugs-pa school's rise to political power. Later he received the title of Zhal-ngo which we will use hereafter when referring to him. He sought the support of the Dzungars from western Mongolia and inspired them with a military stratagem which consisted in successively attacking the other Mongol tribes sympathetic to the king of gTsang; then the eastern Tibetans of Khams, who were also partisans of the royal government; and finally, the king and his entourage in gTsang, giving rise to the dGe-lugs-pa political and religious supremacy.

The Dzungars had indeed been actively supporting the dGe-lugs-pa school in their own country. In 1636, one of their leaders, Gushi Khan of the Qoshot tribe, decided to attack the Mongol tribe of Chogthur, an ally of the king of gTsang. Originally from Khalka, Chogthur's tribe had been expelled from Central Mongolia in 1634 and had settled in the Kokonor region in Amdo, north-eastern Tibet. In 1637, after having defeated Chogthur and his 40,000 men in Kokonor, Gushi Khan settled there in his turn and soon became the sole leader of the Mongols in the region. He and several of his men travelled to Central Tibet that year disguised as pilgrims. He was received in audience and it was at this time that the Fifth Dalai Lama bestowed on him the name of bsTan-'dzin chos-rgyal before the holy image of the Buddha in the Jo-khang temple in Lhasa for having defended dGe-lugs-pa interests in the Kokonor region. The meeting was to have far-reaching historical consequences. As soon as he returned to the Kokonor region, the Mongol chief began to prepare his campaign against Don-yod, King of Be-ri, in the province of Khams in eastern Tibet. Don-yod was an ally of the king of gTsang, and, moreover, a Bon practitionner, which made him a staunch enemy of the Mongols who had just recently converted to Buddhism. In 1641, after a year of fighting,

Gushi Khan defeated the king of Be-ri. His prestige as a warrior was now unequalled as much among the Tibetans as the Mongols.

During the campaign against Be-ri, the Fifth Dalai Lama and the Zhal-ngo discussed the question of whether Gushi Khan and his men should return to Kokonor. They decided to send an emissary to Khams to contact the Mongol chief. In the presence of both the Dalai Lama and the emissary, the Zhal-ngo pretended to agree with the Dalai Lama that Gushi Khan should return to Kokonor after his campaign in eastern Tibet. However, just as the emissary was about to leave, the Zhal-ngo ordered him to tell Gushi Khan to lead his army against gTsang.

At the beginning of 1642, during the annual festival of the Great Prayer in Lhasa presided over by the Fifth Dalai Lama, news of Gushi Khan's victory in eastern Tibet and his army's advance against gTsang reached the city. The news greatly surprised the Dalai Lama and the Zhal-ngo finally told him the truth: that in fact he himself had issued this order in the Dalai Lama's name! Shortly after, Gushi Khan's army confronted the king's troops. It was to be a long and bloody war. After many months of battle, the king's troops finally withdrew behind the walls of their stronghold at bSam-'grub-rtse. The Mongol troops, who had the advantage in open battle on the plain, now had to wait for the provisions of the king's army to run out. The Zhal-ngo, more and more concerned over the course the events were taking, requested the Dalai Lama to go to gTsang as mediator. The Dalai Lama then displayed his true political stature by saying:

> I have told you many times that I do not like this kind of thing (i.e. war). But you never listened to me. Now all know that the partisans of dGa'-ldan pho-brang have rebelled and that our man, gTar-sdong-pa, leads the Mongol army. Can there be any hope of mediation at present? The king and his entourage, being wise, might respond favourably to my demands. But the Mongols will never leave now. For my part, I am determined not to remain under the king's rule.

Towards the end of 1642, having resisted the Mongols for almost a year, the king and his two ministers finally surrendered. The Zhal-ngo and Gushi Khan then invited the Dalai Lama to bSam-'grub-rtse. Gushi Khan and the Zhal-ngo went to greet the pontiff and his entourage in Thobgyal. The next day he was received by a long procession consisting of the local population headed by six hundred horsemen. The Dalai Lama was then enthroned as King of Tibet at bSam-'grub-rtse and Gushi Khan offered him his conquests of Central and Eastern Tibet as a gift. 1642 was a crucial year and marked a turning point in Tibetan history because, for the



first time, a Dalai Lama, previously merely the abbot of a monastery and leader of one religious school among others, became the head of the country. The consequences of his rise to power were to be tremendous.

Although he had firmly established his power in Central Tibet, the Dalai Lama still had to face various military conflicts in other regions, especially in Kong-po and the south where the leader of the Karma bka'-brgyud school had escaped and where the population, who for the most part belonged to this school, were determined to resist. During the following years, the Fifth Dalai Lama travelled extensively in order to ease the situation. Around the same period, the Zhal-ngo took on the function of sDe-srid, 'regent', and became responsible for governmental affairs, while Gushi Khan, who never claimed a political position, retained his role as the defender of the new government, always ready to intervene with his army if the need arised. The Fifth Dalai Lama continued to address him as 'king' since he was the king of the Mongols of Kokonor, and not 'King of Tibet' as it has been claimed.

The political structure of the new state began to take shape. The Dalai Lama was head of state. He was therefore placed above the *mchod yon* structure, the 'patron-preceptor' relationship. The sDe-srid assumed the role of preceptor and Gushi Khan that of patron even though he was not really considered a foreigner since he had established himself in the Tibetan region of Kokonor and had placed himself entirely at the service of the Dalai Lama.

The palace of dGa'-ldan pho-brang, situated as it was within the monastic complex of 'Bras-spungs, no longer befitted the purposes of the new state since 'Bras-spungs could not be considered the political capital of Tibet. This was equally true of Gong-dkar castle, Gushi Khan's residence. Since the political situation in Kong-po, and even more so in southern Tibet, remained tense, the construction of a reliable stronghold which would also serve as the new government's seat was deemed necessary. dKon-mchog chos-'phel (d.1646), tutor of the Fifth Dalai Lama who at the time occupied the throne of Tsongkhapa (founder of the dGe-lugs-pa school) suggested the Potala Hill as an ideal site as it was situated between the monasteries of 'Bras-spungs and Se-ra, and the city of Lhasa. The construction of the Potala palace began in 1645 and its eastern section, 'the White Palace', was partially completed in 1649. Later that year, the Fifth Dalai Lama and his government took up residence there.

Shortly after, the Fifth Dalai Lama had to deal with political issues beyond Tibet, especially concerning relations with China which were to have great consequence on the future history of Tibet.

During this time a new power, the Manchus (a population of Tungus language) had emerged in the east. They had conquered China and established their capital in Peking. Mongolia (today's Outer Mongolia)

represented a serious threat for the new empire. The Dalai Lama had considerable religious and political influence not only in Mongolia whose population had for the most part converted to the dGe-lugs-pa school of Buddhism, but also in the Kokonor region. Thus he played an essential role in the maintenance of peace which the Manchus, fearing Mongol attacks, desperately needed at that time.

After having received several invitations from the Manchu Emperor Shun-chih to make a state visit at Peking, the Dalai Lama finally accepted to go in 1652. He set out with an entourage of 3,000 men, and the journey lasted nine months. When the Dalai Lama reached the Sino-Tibetan border in Amdo, he sent a message to the Emperor requesting him to meet him at the border. This demand provoked divergent reactions between the Manchu and Chinese officials of the imperial court. While the Manchus were willing to comply, the Chinese officials were not. Finally, the Tibetan and imperial officials reached a compromise to solve this problem of protocol. Since the Dalai Lama was a guest he would travel into Chinese territory to Khi-ri ta-kha where the Manchu government had erected a residence to accomodate him. Because of the poor harvest and an epidemic in China that year, it was agreed that the Dalai Lama would proceed from there with only three hundred men. The Emperor would await the Dalai Lama at Ri-dvags kho-tho, a place where he often went hunting.

As soon as the Dalai Lama entered Chinese territory, the Emperor sent emissaries, mostly members of the imperial family, to greet him all along his way. The Fifth Dalai Lama himself recounts in his writings his meeting with the Emperor and all the intricacies of protocol surrounding it:

> The 16th of the 12th month, I met the king. We entered a place surrounded by walls, and the seven royal emblems, symbols of the Universal King, unravelled before us. They were all impressive and comparable to the glory of Indra. When the throne became visible, those near me dismounted and continued on foot. I proceeded another 400 metres and then dismounted, while the king equally descended from his throne and walked approximately ten metres towards me. He took my hands and welcomed me with interpreters. He then returned to his throne whose height reached a man's hip. On the throne stood a low stool on which he sat. A metre away another throne had been erected for me. It was slightly lower (due to the small stool on the other). When tea was served, the king asked me to drink first. I replied that this would not be proper. So he suggested we drink at the same time. He showed much respect (to his guest).



During his sojourn in Peking, the Dalai Lama resided in the Yellow Palace specially built near Peking for the sate visit. His stay there lasted two months and was marked by two grand imperial receptions given in his honour and by various other official receptions given one another. He left Peking at the beginning of 1653 for Khi-ri ta-kha where he remained three months to prepare his return journey to Lhasa.

Just a few days before his departure for Tibet, a gold seal with a gold plaque engraved with a decree were hastily sent to him from Peking. The imperial functionaries had not dared present the seal in front of the Emperor to the Dalai Lama while he was officially visiting Peking as head of state of a foreign country. Since the seal was offered to the Dalai Lama with no particular form of protocol, he attached little importance to it. He simply remarks in his autobiography that the Tibetan translation of the title engraved on the seal was very poor. The seal, however, is currently exploited by the Chinese authorities for propaganda purposes to justify their policy towards Tibet.

For having successfully achieved this long and hazardous journey, the Dalai Lama was welcomed with great pomp by the whole population of Lhasa and representatives of all the other regions of Tibet who organised a triumphant march in his honour. The number of gifts he received from the Amdo Tibetans, Mongols, Manchus and Chinese for the Buddhist teachings he had dispensed throughout his journey was impressive: thousands of horses, camels and precious objects.

Upon his return the Dalai Lama was again faced with internal political problems where his abilities as a negotiator were put to test. He took the opportunity while visiting bSam-'grub-rtse in 1654 to resolve a politico-religious problem which had been hindering his rule for a long time. In 1621, the king of gTsang entrusted the organisation of the annual festival of the Great Prayer in Lhasa to Pan-chen Blo-bzang chos-rgyan and his monastery, bKra-shis lhun-po, in order to thank him for his mediation between the royal forces and the dGe-lugs-pa monks of Lhasa, supported by the Mongols. The sDe-srid, always primarily concerned with the interests of 'Bras-spungs, reclaimed the duty of organising the yearly festival for his own monastery, as had always been the case prior to 1621. In 1632, bKra-shis lhun-po was forced to return this function to 'Bras-spungs, but relations between Pan-chen Blo-bzang chos-rgyan and the sDe-srid remained strained. They were finally reconciled by the Dalai Lama when he visited bSam-'grub-rtse in 1654.

Futhermore, in 1674, the Dalai Lama received the Karma-pa at the Potala with all the respect due to his rank, a reconciliation welcomed by both parties after the many conflicts and misunderstandings that had lasted from 1612 to 1642. But he was not so lenient towards the other schools. For instance, the Jo-nang-pa school, who had hoped to obtain the same

child who was later to become the Fifth Dalai Lama as one of their own reincarnations, was banished from Central Tibet to Amdo. As for the Bonpo monasteries, several were forced to convert to the dGe-lugs-pa tradition. The new government's attitude, however, was in fact determined by political rather than religious considerations.

Two other incidents during the rule of the Fifth Dalai Lama provide an interesting insight into the court intrigues at the time, more specifically into the relations between religion and politics and their effects which can still be felt today.

In 1654, Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, the reincarnation who was installed in the 'Upper Chamber' at 'Bras-spungs, died. It should be recalled that he had been one of the candidates for the reincarnation of the Fourth Dalai Lama. As a result, he was always seen as a rival of the Fifth Dalai Lama even though he invariably proclaimed himself a disciple of the latter. He came to be despised by a number of officials and especially the sDe-srid. The circumstances of his death, whether natural or not, were contested and part of the dGe-lugs-pa school believed that the official Nor-bu, acting under the sDe-srid's orders, had assassinated him. Whatever the truth, the search for his reincarnation was banned, which suggests that the affair must have been quite serious indeed. In 1658, the actual building of the 'Upper Chamber' was destroyed and the *stūpa* containing the remains of the Lama was supposedly thrown into the sKyid-chu river. It was then believed that the spirit of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan had returned as a sort of 'protector of the Buddhist religion'. This marked the beginning of his cult as a protective deity, later named rDo-rje shugs-ldan by a dGe-lugs-pa faction. This cult however has always been a controversial issue and was recently banned by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in India. The mystery surrounding Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan's death thus remains one of the most enigmatic aspects of the Fifth Dalai Lama's rule. Indeed, in 1659, the official Nor-bu, who had settled at Gad-kha gsar-pa, a residence belonging to Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan's family, fomented a rebellion against the Fifth Dalai Lama's government. He was suspected of conspiring with the Bhutanese, great enemies of the dGe-lugs-pa. Thanks to the intervention of Pan-chen Blo-bzang chos-rgyan the conflict was resolved.

In 1662, the Abbot Pan-chen Blo-bzang chos-rgyan died at the age of 93. The Fifth Dalai Lama immediately decided to establish the system of his reincarnation. He ordered the monks of the great monasteries to recite a prayer he composed himself, requesting the master 'to return'. The reincarnation was discovered in 1667 in the Bru family, one of the five great lineages of the Bon tradition, probably in a gesture of reconciliation with this particular religious tradition which he later in an edict recognised as one of the official religions in Tibet. The consequences of the official establishment of this system of reincarnation have not always been



favourable to the political unity of the dGe-lugs-pa, and therefore to Tibetan unity as a whole. The lamas of this series of reincarnation later became known as the Panchen Lama and were often considered spiritually eminent, but on the political level their relations with the Dalai Lamas were often difficult despite the spiritual master-disciple relationship they were supposed to maintain with one another. The Panchen Lama was often the object of manipulation against the Dalai Lama, first by the Manchu, then the British in India, and finally, by both the Kuomingtang and communist Chinese.

The ever increasing diplomatic activities of the Fifth Dalai Lama, often dictated by the circumstances of the day, covered not only the whole of the Tibetan world, Mongolia, Ladakh and Bhutan, but also extended as far as China. The danger of conflicts breaking out was ever present, and the Dalai Lama not only had to ensure the survival of his own government but also to act as a mediator between the various rising political powers who were always threatening to disrupt the established order.

Under the Fifth Dalai Lama's rule, as under the ancient Tibetan empire, Kokonor in Amdo became one of the most important strategic regions. The pontiff was quick to realise this as he travelled through the region, first in 1652 and then in 1653. Eight of Gushi Khan's ten sons with their respective tribes had settled there in 1638 after their arrival from western Mongolia. The brothers were constantly engaged in territorial quarrels. In 1656 and in 1659, the Dalai Lama sent a number of governors to Kokonor. One of them divided the local populations into right and left 'horns'. The Mongols of this region were later completely Tibetanised but continued to enjoy considerable prestige among the Tibetans as descendants of Gushi Khan. They clearly played a significant role in the expansion of the dGe-lugs-pa school in Amdo. In 1667, 1674 and 1675, at the request of the Manchu Emperor, the Dalai Lama on several occasions played an important diplomatic role as a mediator in the military conflicts opposing Manchus and Mongols and between the Manchu Emperor and a minister of his predecessor. These mediations clearly show the importance of the Dalai Lama's political and religious influence over the Mongols, Manchus, Chinese and Tibetan populations.

Two other important diplomatic events marked his reign. Under the rule of the king of gTsang, relations between Tibet and Bhutan, then simply designated as Mon, entered a difficult phase. Again the issue concerned a reincarnation. There were two candidates for the reincarnation of Padma dkar-po (1527-1592), the great scholar of the 'Brug-pa school. The candidate Ngag-dbang rnam-rgyal (1594-1651), recognised as the reincarnation, was supported by his own family of Ra-lung, the seat of the school, while the other candidate, dPag-bsam dbang-po (1593-1641), a

cousin of the Fifth Dalai Lama, was supported by the king of gTsang. Ngag-dbang rnam-rgyal had defied the king's order to bring to the court the holy image of Khasarpāṇa preserved by his family. Indeed, this would have meant that he renounced his status as Padma dkar-po's reincarnation. His refusal angered the king and he was forced to flee to Mon taking the image with him. There he established his own politico-religious power and administration over a great part of the local population, thus unifying Bhutan. The constitution of a 'Brug-pa state headed by a religious and political enemy did not greatly appeal to the Lhasa government. Following territorial skirmishes, in 1647 the sDe-srid decided to launch a military campaign against Bhutan; however, this ended in a humiliating defeat for the dGe-lugs-pa and their Mongol allies.

On the other hand, the campaign against Ladakh in 1679 was crowned with success and the regions of mNga'-ris in Western Tibet which the kings of Ladakh had annexed were taken back. Thus under the Fifth Dalai Lama, Tibet, from mNga'-ris in the west to Dar-tse-mdo, Khams, in the south-east and to Kokonor in Amdo in the north-east was reunified for the first time since the collapse of the Tibetan empire in the ninth century A.D.

Over and above his political achievements, the Fifth Dalai Lama was far more concerned with spiritual matters. Writing was his favourite occupation and he never interrupted it whatever the circumstances, whether he was travelling or in retreat. His works fill up 24 volumes. Besides composing a number of treatises on various subjects, he also related his visionary experiences which he kept secret due to the disapproval of his own religious school of such matters. He wrote in a very free and personal style which allowed him to express his own feelings which were at once frank and ironic. His autobiography is characterised by his spontaneity, his sarcasm and his humourous remarks concerning his own status as a reincarnation and the fundamentalist attitude of his own school, the dGe-lugs-pa. Very often, unlike other traditional dGe-lugs-pa authors, he gives his own independent interpretation which he never attempts to impose. Concerning two treatises he had completed, he writes: "When I finished the *'Jam dpal zhal lung*, I had to leave the ranks of the dGe-lugs-pa. Today, having completed the *Rig 'dzin zhal lung*, I think I will probably have to withdraw from the rNying-ma-pa ranks as well!" In fact, both texts later came to be considered as masterpieces and works of reference by all the Tibetan Buddhist schools. His approach to the various religious and philosophical traditions was indeed deeply universalist, which helped a rule that was marked by great tolerance towards the other schools. The Bonpo, followers of the Bon religion, the only non-Buddhist religion of Tibet, were, after certain difficulties at the beginning of his rule, respected both at the doctrinal and political levels.



The Fifth Dalai Lama continued to write until a few months before his death in 1682, at the age of 65. His exceptional personality, both complex and engaging, made him undeniably one of the most important figures in Tibetan history. His legacy was to have a profound effect on almost every aspect of the country's culture, notably architecture, poetry, historiography, civil administration, painting and, of course, philosophy and Buddhist meditation. He was both a remarkable statesman and Buddhist monk, thus embodying the Buddhist ideal of a 'great being'. Tibetan tradition still venerates him as the 'Great Fifth'. His strict monastic discipline concealed yet another facet of his spiritual life: his great interest for tantric, more or less magical rituals, and, above all, his inclination for mystic meditation which provided him with a series of visionary experiences throughout his life. These he revealed only in his writings which remained little known in his time and which show his never ceasing concern for the welfare of his people and country.

# The Gold Seal: the Fifth Dalai Lama and Emperor Shun-chih

The Fifth Dalai Lama's journey to China in the seventeenth century is, of course, well known. The accounts of this journey given in general works on Tibet, however, do not always correspond exactly to what the Dalai Lama himself relates about it in his autobiography.[1]

Before disscussing how the seal was offered to the Dalai Lama, it is perhaps important to examine briefly where these accounts diverge.

According to some authors,[2] Gushi Khan urged the Fifth Dalai Lama to go to China. According to his autobiography the Dalai Lama did not know of the rise to power of Shun-chih, the first Manchu emperor, until 1646[3] and received an official invitation to pay a state visit in 1648.[4] The following year, the Dalai Lama decided to accept the invitation[5] and set out for China in 1652.[6] He makes no mention of Gushi Khan advising him to undertake this journey. In 1643, just after he had conquered Tibet, Gushi Khan invited the Dalai Lama to visit him in the Kokonor region[7] where the Mongol leader wished the Dalai Lama to see his newly established stronghold. We gather from the Dalai Lama's autobiography that he was not eager to go; as he could hardly refuse such an invitation, he asked the advice of the rNying-ma-pa master Rig-'dzin Yol-mo-ba (died 1644) who told him that "this Mongol (i.e. Gushi Khan) would probably not insist on his coming, but that in a few years he would receive an invitation from the East, from a people whose manner differed from that of Gushi Khan" (*da lta'i sog po 'dis don la gdan mi 'drongs lo shas song mtshams 'di tsho dang cha lugs mi gcig pa shar phyogs nas gdan 'dren yong.../*).[8] This is the only information he provides on this episode in his autobiography.

1. *DK*.
2. Snellgrove, Richardson, 1968: 198.
3. *DK*, Ka, f.133a,3.
4. *Ibid*., 146a, 1. The Fifth Dalai Lama is said to have made contact with the Manchu ruler T'ai-tsung in Mukden in 1640 (Snellgrove, Richardson: 1968: 198). The same Manchu ruler is also said to have sent an invitation to the Dalai Lama in 1640 and the latter in turn sent presents to him (Kolmas,1967: 35), but these events are not recorded in the autobiography if ever such took place. The authors do not give their sources.
5. *Ibid*., f.147a, 3.
6. *Ibib*., f.159a, 6; f.174a, 1.
7. *Ibid*., 119b, 3.
8. *Ibid*., f.119b, 4.



However, we find in the Dalai Lama's secret biography that he is more specific: "At the age of twenty-seven, in the 11th month of the water-sheep year (1643), I went into retreat for a week at dGa'-tshal chos-'byung.[9] In the morning I recited Vajrakīla's *mantra* and in the evening I propitiated rDo-rje 'bar-ba, the mountain deity of gNyan-chen Thang-lha, and asked him to spare me from having to go to Kokonor. One day, as I was performing the 'invitation rite' (*spyan 'dren*) for the mountain deity, a pleasant fragrance which I had never smelt before filled the chapel. Since the year of the water-horse (1642), Gushi Khan and his first wife repeatedly invited me to go to Kokonor. But four months after my retreat, the king (Gushi Khan) who at the time resided at Gong-dkar, let me know that he had changed his mind about the invitation. We were both relieved that the question had thus been solved."[10]

This passage clearly states that Gushi Khan finally withdrew his invitation and that the Dalai Lama's appeal to the mountain deity was answered. Again there is no mention whatsoever of Gushi Khan suggesting to the Dalai Lama that he go to China.

The Dalai Lama, however, often sought the counsel of his rNying-ma-pa masters, especially Zur Chos-dbyings rang-grol (1610-1657). In 1646, still according to his secret biography,[11] Zur received several indications in a dream concerning a journey to China. He described them to the Dalai Lama who writes in his autobiography that "it was indeed a prophecy, since at the time I had no intention of going to China." The journey, as we shall see later, took place seven years after Zur's prophecy. Again there is no indication suggesting that Gushi Khan persuaded the Dalai Lama to go to China.

According to G. Tucci,[12] the Dalai Lama received the Emperor's invitation in 1651 and left for China a month later with a retinue of 200. In fact, according to his autobiography, he had received the invitation as early as the end of 1648, as mentioned above, and he decided to accept it a year later,[13] but the departure was postponed. At the beginning of 1650, the Emperor sent another emissary to reiterate the invitation[14] even though the Dalai Lama had accepted the year before. In 1651, another emissary was sent to Lhasa, this time requesting the exact date of the travel.[15] The Dalai Lama then decided to leave in 1652,[16] four years after

9. The name of the Chos-'khor-rgyal monastery in 'Ol-kha, founded in 1509 by dGe-'dun rgya-mtsho, the Second Dalai Lama, *cf*. Ferrari, 1958: 48.
10. *ThDD* (Karmay, 1988b: 30); *cf*. also *DK*, Ka, f.120b, 2.
11. *ThDD* (Karmay, 1988b: 31).
12. 1949: 68.
13. *DK*, Ka, f. 147a, 3.
14. *Ibid*., f.152a, 4.
15. *Ibid*., f.158b, 6.
16. *Ibid*., f.159a, 6; f.174a, 2.

he had received the first invitation, even though the monks of the main monasteries besought him to defer his decision.[17]

G. Tucci gives the impression that the Dalai Lama was in a hurry to get to China in order to receive an imperial title. But in fact the subject is far more complex, as we shall see when we examine the different stages of the journey related in the autobiography.

At the beginning of December 1652, the Dalai Lama reached Khi-ri ta'i-kha,[18] where the Emperor had built a small palace for him to accomodate him.[19] There he established the headquarters of his main camp which consisted of a retinue of 3000, men and not 200 as suggested elsewhere. The great number of his retinue caused concern to the Emperor because the harvest in China had been particularly bad that year.[20] The Dalai Lama himself, before the beginning of the jouirney, let the Emperor know that he did not wish to remain for a long time in China because of the climate and the smallpox epidemic.[21] Finally they agreed that the Dalai Lama would continue into China with only 300 officials, leaving the rest of his entourage behind at Khi-ri ta'i-kha.[22] As soon as they entered Chinese territory, imperial emissaries, mostly members of the imperial family, came one after the other to welcome him.[23] He travelled for two more weeks before reaching Chen-l'ou where the Emperor came to greet him in person. The Dalai Lama wrote: "The Emperor had come to welcome me in accordance with the traditional protocol in a place called Ri-dgas kho-tho" (*gong mas sngar gyi yig tshang rnams dang bstun bsu ba'i tshul gyis ri dgas kho thor phebs 'dug pa...*).[24] He specifies that both there and in Peking he was warmly welcomed. The following day he finally reached the Yellow Palace, near Peking, which had been specially built for his state visit.[25]

During his sojourn in Peking which lasted approximately a month,[26] two grand imperial receptions were given in his honour[27] and each hosted several oficial receptions for the other. At the two grand imperial receptions a great number of gifts were exchanged. On no occasion during his stay in Peking did the Dalai Lama receive any kind of seal with a title from the Emperor. In other words, as M. Rockhill

17. *Ibid.*, f.159a, 2.
18. *DK*, Ka, f.195b, 4. For the idenfication of this place, see Rockhill, 1910: 14.
19. *DK*, Ka, f.195b, 4.
20. Rockhill, 1910: 15.
21. *DK*, Ka, f.147a, 3; 196a, 6.
22. *Ibid.*, f.196b, 1; Rockhill, 1910: 16.
23. *Ibid.*, f.195a, 5; f.197b, 1.
24. *Ibid.*, f.197b, 4.
25. *Ibid.*, f.198b, 1.
26. Not six months as Kolmas writes (1967:: 35).
27. *Ibid.*, f.199b, 1; f.203a, 6.



pointed out at the beginning of the century,[28] the pontiff was received with all the decorum due to a sovereign. Kolmas's statement that "he was proclaimed Dalai Lama by imperial edict" is chronically inaccurate.[29] Due to his great religious and political influence over the Mongols at the time, to confer on him a title as if he were a vassal was out of the question. It was precisely to appease the Mongols that the Manchus wished the Dalai Lama to visit Peking even if only briefly, and even though it meant they had to treat the Tibetans as equals in status.

In April 1653, the Dalai Lama left Peking for Khi-ri ta'i-kha[30] where he remained for three months to prepare his return to Tibet. It was towards the end of his sojourn there, only a few days before his departure, that the famous gold seal and plaque engraved with an ordinance were hastily sent to him from Peking.[31]

In his autobiography, the Dalai Lama briefly mentions receiving the seal, simply describing its dimensions as if it were an ordinary gift among others. His only comment is that in the opinion of a Chinese, the title engraved in Tibetan is a poor translation from the Chinese probably due to the fact that it was translated by a Mongol.[32] He then gives the translation proposed by the Chinese.

Since I know neither Manchu nor Chinese, I will leave to experts the task of deciphering the title engraved in both these languages.[33]

The following is the supposedly incorrect Tibetan translation of the Chinese engraved on the seal:
"The sovereign of the excellent virtuous Western fields, Master of all Buddha's doctrines on earth, Vajradhara, the Omniscient, the seal of the Dalai Lama" (*nub phyogs mchogd (mchog tu) dge ba'i zhing gi rgyal dbang sa steng gi rgyal bstan yongs kyi bdag po thamsd (thams cad) myen (mkhyen) pa bdzar dhar ta la'i bla ma'i tham ka/*).[34]
The title was also translated directly from Chinese into English by M. Rockhill: "Most excellent, self-existing Buddha, universal Ruler of the Buddhist faith, Vajradhara, Dalai Lama."[35]

The following is the other Tibetan translation proposed by the Chinese which the Dalai Lama mentions in his autobiography:

28. Rockhill, 1910: 18; Ahmad, 1970: 183.
29. Kolmas, 1967: 35.
30. *DK*, Ka, f.204a, 4.
31. *Ibid.*, f.209a, 6.
32. *Ibid.*, f.209b, 3: *tham kar yod pa de sog po'i lo tsa bas...*
33. According to *DK*, Ka, f. 209a, 1, the title is written in Chinese, Mongol and Tibetan (*rgya hor bod gsum*). In fact, the order of the inscriptions on the seal is Manchu, Tibetan and Chinese. This ordering of the languages shows that it is Manchu and not Chinese that was considered as the primary language.
34. *Cf. Le Tibet*, Paris, Edition du Fanal, 1982, Illustration 19.
35. 1910: 18, n.1.

"He who resides in the Western peaceful and virtuous paradise, unalterable Vajradhara, Ocean Lama, Unifier, under the Buddha's law, of all the doctrines for all beings under the sky" (*nub kyi lha gnas ches dge ba bde bar gnas pa'i sangs rgyas bka' lung gnam 'og gi skye 'gro thams cad bstan pa gcig tu gyur ba 'gyur med rdo rje 'chang rgya mtsho'i lama/*).[36]

According to W. D. Shakabpa, the Dalai Lama also bestowed a title on the Emperor while in Peking, but he does not mention his sources.[37] In any event, the Dalai Lama does not mention doing so in his autobiography. It seems that Z. Ahmad is the only one who has treated the subject according to the documents referred to here, but his translation of the Tibetan passages remains vague.[38]

In conclusion it is perhaps important to reflect on the significance attached to the offering and reception of the seal.

According to the Emperor's edict, translated by Rockhill, upon his arrival at the Chinese border, the Dalai Lama sent a letter to the Emperor demanding that he greet him there.[39] The request entailed a problem of protocol. Still according to the edict, the Emperor's official advisers were divided on the matter. The Emperor himself and the Manchus were prepared to accept the demand, while the Chinese advisers would have been content to send a few imperial princes with gifts.

The seal, as previously mentioned, was not presented to the Dalai Lama while he was in Peking but was sent in haste when he was in Khi-ri ta'i-kha, just before his departure for Tibet. This raises the question of whether the Emperor's advisers were divided on the subject of the seal's offering. Moreover, in the autobiography the seal is simply mentioned along with the other gifts the Dalai Lama received from the Emperor, giving the impression that no particular meaning was ascribed to the gold seal.

36. *DK*, Ka, f.209a, 6. For English translation of the title in Chinese, see Aris, 1979: 17, 1. For an another interpretation of the title, see also Martynov, 1979.
37. Shakabpa, 1967: 116.
38. Ahmad, 1970: 186.
39. Rockhill, 1910: 14-15.



# Amdo, One of the Three Traditional Provinces of Tibet

Before I begin, let me pay homage to the American scholar-explorers of Amdo. The foremost among these are of course William. W. Rockhill, Joseph F. Rock and Robert B. Ekvall. Thanks to their exploration and study of Amdo and its people we can say that we now know a good deal about the social, economic and political life of the Amdo people before the Chinese communist take-over. Their publications have not only enriched our understanding of its culture and history, but also, to us Tibetans, they are a great American contribution to the effort for preserving our cultural heritage.

By the term Amdo, the Tibetans in general denote the whole province, not just the Eastern and Southern parts of the province as is often written or indicated on maps. The region - mTsho-sngon in Tibetan, Kokonor in Mongolian and Chinghai in Chinese, all meaning Blue Lake - is considered as part of Amdo. This part of Amdo was in the Tibetan Imperial days known as Tsong-kha and remained so till Tsong-kha-pa's time in the fifteenth century.

Amdo, in north-eastern Tibet, is considered by the Tibetans as one of their three traditional provinces of Tibet. Its northern part touches Tsha-'dam, the 'Salt Marsh' in the extreme north, and the Chinese town of Songpan at the end of the valley of the Shar-khog region, in the extreme south-east on the Sichuan border. In the west, with the region of mGo-log it borders on Khams, the other eastern province of Tibet while in the east it has a common border with the Gansu province of China proper. What distinguishes Tibet from China proper is the natural boundary of the Tibetan plateau whose landscape is often barren and arid as the land gradually rises from China towards Tibet. The traveller can easily notice the constant moving upwards. This geographical distinction is already noted by the early Chinese pilgrims and travellers going to India through Tibet in the seventh century A.D. This is so whether one approaches Amdo from Lanzhou in the east or from Chingdu to Shar-khog in the south-east. On approaching the Tibetan plateau, the first sign of its Tibetan inhabitants that you will see is the prayer flag erected on the roof tops or at the entrances of the houses. Early European travellers noted that once you crossed this boundary there was usually free food and lodging for the night and nobody ever charged for a cup of tea!

One of the cultural elements that distinguishes the people of Amdo from other Tibetans, apart from the geographical factor, is their dialect,

which is Tibetan, but very noticeably different from that of Central Tibet, having preserved much of the archaic form of ancient Tibetan. Within Amdo itself, different dialects exist such as that of the nomads in the north and west or that of the sedentary peoples in the east and south-east, but they are all basically the same.

### Caravans and trading centres

Traditionally, there were two main Chinese trading centres with which the Tibetans in Amdo had much commercial intercourse: Xining (Zi-ling) in the east, and Songpan (Zong-chu-mkhar) in the south-east. These Chinese towns were originally official seats and military posts. Chinese traders who wanted to travel beyond these posts had to obtain special passes. It was from these places that Amdowa, i.e. the Tibetans in Amdo, used to export salt, wool, musk, deer horns, skins and other such animal products and as well as rhubarbs and medicinal herbs. Songpan is the last Chinese town in the Shar-khog region; locally it is called Shar-khog, but was known as Zong-chu in Central Tibet and in early Dunhuang documents. Both Xining and Songpan were from early times considered strategically important places in addition to being commercial centres. According to the Duhuang documents, it was in 701 A.D. in the region of Zong-chu that the Tibetans and the Chinese armies clashed for the first time. Songpan, which used to be a walled town, is now a fairly large Chinese city. The Zong-chu area is very well known in China because of the gold mine in the Tibetan region there. While Songpan is situated at the confluence of three valleys on the river rGya-chu, Xining lies at the intersection of four valleys, on the river Tsong-chu. The Tibetan region of Songpan is the home of the pandas and two famous natural beauty spots which attract thousands of tourists from Hongkong and Taiwan. Only a few Western travellers arrived there early this century, including Alexandra David-Néel, a French woman and Captain Gill, an Englishman. J. F. Rock passed through this region in 1927 on the way from Cone to Chengdu.

Let me now give you an example of the kind of trade which the Sharwa people (the Tibetans from Shar-khog) used to carry on with the Chinese in Songpan. Before the communist invasion there was an annual commercial expedition mainly organized by about 40 rich families. Each family owned 30-100 *dzo*, a cross-breed between the female yak and an ordinary bull, highly valued in Amdo. These families ordered 30 kg tea boxes from the Chinese. When the season came, these families would set out for A-rig Sog-po, a nomadic place about 600 km in the north. The journey took about four months, and the caravan consisted of about 200 men and 2,000 pack animals loaded with tea boxes. When they arrived in A-rig Sog-po, they exchanged their tea with the nomads for either wool or



salt which they took back to Songpan and sold to the Chinese for large sums of money.

It was also an occasion for those who so desired to distinguish themeselves by displaying courage against the formidable mGo-log brigands as well as enduring the hardship of travelling in the winter. The cowboys in nineteenth century America offer something of a parallel.

This commercial expedition illustrates the kind of economic life that existed between the nomads who inhabit most of the regions in the north and the farmers in the south and south-east. The latter kept a large number of domestic animals but rarely bred yaks or sheep on the scale of the nomads. A farming family in Amdo Sharwa kept horses, yaks, sheep, goats, pigs, and hens on the farm, while *dzo* and pack animals were kept up in the mountains all year round till they were needed for the commercial expedition.

The Amdowa had never been ruled by any one leader as a united people ever since the fall of the Tibetan empire in the ninth century A.D. For the imperial government in Lhasa (i.e. from the seventh to the ninth centuries), Amdo, then known as Tsong-kha or mDo-smad, had mainly military and strategic importance, as home to the eastern Tibetan military headquaters, known as mThong-khyab. The famous battles between the armies of the *btsan po* (= Emperor) of Tibet and the Tang Emperors of China took place on the borders which stretched from the north-eastern parts of Kokonor through Gansu, Co-ne, The-bo, 'Pan-chu, Khod-po to Songpan in Zong-chu (=Sharkhog).

Three Sino-Tibetan Peace Treaties were concluded during this period. According to early Chinese sources, the first Sino-Tibetan peace treaty, which was signed in 730 A.D., states that the geographical frontier was Gong-bu dmar-ru, the Red Hill (Trilen in Chinese sources), or rDo Nyi-zla, south-east of Kokonor. William W. Rockhill passed over this mountain in 1892 on his way to Tibet and noted it down very clearly as the Sino-Tibetan frontier. In the third Sino-Tibetan peace treaty, which was first concluded in 821 A.D. in Ch'ang-an, now Xi'an, the capital of the Tang China and was signed the following year in Lhasa in 822 A.D., no particular place name is given to demarcate the border. It further states that the Tibetans are happy in Tibet and the Chinese are happy in China. The texts of this peace treaty are inscribed on a pillar which still stands in front of Jo-khang in Lhasa. To commemorate this Sino-Tibetan peace treaty, a Buddhist temple called De-ga g.yu-tshal was constructed in Tsong-kha soon after the conclusion of the treaty. The precise location of this temple is not yet known, but it is generally assumed that it must be in the area of the present sKu-'bum monastery. It is the first Buddhist temple in Amdo mentioned in contemporary sources such as the Tibetan

Dunhuang documents. The third peace treaty was, of course, considered much more important than the two previous ones.

At any rate, it is interesting to note that Lieou Yuan-ting, the Chinese ambassador who represented China at the official treaty-signing ceremony at Lhasa in 822 A.D. reports that when he stopped in Amdo on his way back to China from Lhasa, he attended a Tibetan ceremony at which the renowned Tibetan minister and general from Amdo, Zhang Khri-sum-rje of 'Bro, read out the texts of the peace treaty in front of 100 other generals in order to solemnize the conclusion of the peace treaty of which he was one of the architects.

**Mongols and Manchus**

After the fall of the Tibetan empire, very little is known about the political history of Amdo until the Mongol empire in the thirteenth century. On the other hand, we know its history fairly well from the time of the Mongol conversion to Buddhism by the Third Dalai Lama (1543-1588) in 1578. It was during this time that the Third Dalai Lama paid a visit to Tsong-kha-pa's birthplace and instructed a lama to found a monastery there which was to become known as sKu-'bum, one of the two great dGe-lugs-pa monasteries in Amdo, the other being Bla-brang, south of the lake Kokonor in the Gansu region. It was founded in 1708 and very soon became the largest centre of learning in Amdo for monk-students from Amdo and Khams as well as from Mongolia and Manchuria proper. It produced many great Buddhist philosophers and scholars. Not only Buddhist philosophy but also astrology, medicine, poetry and painting and sculpture were taught there in different colleges. It boasted about 3,000 monk-students and possessed a rich collection of rare manuscripts and printed books which were the object of envy of even the great monasteries in Central Tibet. There was also a large wood-block printing-house within the monastery complex. A thriving town clustered round the western outskirts of the monastery, which is where the American missionary Grant Griebenow - his Tibetan name was Sherab Damphel - lived from 1921 to 1949. dGe-'dun chos-'phel, whom I will discuss later, used to visit him.

However, it is from the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682) that we know the political history of Amdo more fully. The incessant internal feuds among the Mongol tribes, each of whom claimed to follow a diferent order of Tibetan Buddhism, spilled over into neighbouring countries such as Siberia and Tibet. The Qoshots, who were a branch of the Oirat tribe from Western Mongolia, were crushed by the Dzungars, another branch of the same tribe. Toward the end of the sixteenth century a group of Qoshots migrated towards the south-east and finally settled in the north of Kokonor. It was not a military invasion, but migration



caused by their own compatriots that led them to settle on Tibetan land. Gushi Khan, the chief of this tribe, became an ardent supporter of the dGe-lugs-pa's cause and assisted the Fifth Dalai Lama to establish a theocratic gouvernment in Lhasa in 1642. He became a nominal king and lived in Central Tibet all his life, but his connection with the Mongols in Kokonor persisted and a number of his descendants returned to their tribe in Kokonor, finally becoming petty chiefs in Amdo under the Manchu allegiance from 1697 onwards.

This was the beginning of the Manchu domination over the Tibetan territories in Amdo through the Mongols who had settled there. Because of the prestige of Gushi Khan in Central Tibet and the political supremacy of the Fifth Dalai Lama, the descendants of Gushi Khan in Amdo enjoyed considerable political influence in Amdo especially among the nomads, but they were never united even in support of the same Tibetan Buddhist order. Their internal quarrel again caused part of the tribe to migrate further, south of rMa-chu, the Yellow River. There they bcame known as A-rig Sog-po among the Amdowa and later became the privileged commercial partner of the Sharwa people. J. F. Rock has noted that these Mongolian immigrants still retained their yurts instead of using the Tibetan nomadic tents, but this was the only Mongolian feature still perceptible among them. The Mongols became as Tibetanised in Amdo as their overlords, the Manchus, became sinified in China. They were the most fervent supporters of the dGe-lugs-pa order in Amdo, but none became ruler of the whole province due to political manoeuvres of the Manchu imperial policy in the region.

Two factors could be considered as the driving force for the relatively rapid expansion of the dGe-lugs-pa order in Amdo: the conversion of the Mongols to Buddhism by the Third Dalai Lama late in the sixteenth century, and the political influence exercised by the descendants of Gushi Khan in Amdo among the nomads. Eighteenth century Amdo was dominated by the Tibetanised Mongolian Budddhist writers, such as lCang-skya Rol-pa'i rdo-rje (1717-1786) who was the imperial preceptor of the Manchu Emperor Cheng-long and had considerable influence at court when problems arose between the Tibetans and the Manchus. Other Tibetanised Monglian scholars such as, Sum-pa *mkhan po* Ye-shes dpal-'byor (1704-1788).

When the Fifth Dalai Lama made a state visit to Peking in 1652, at the invitation of the Manchu Emperor Shun-chih, he passed through Kokonor and noted that the region was strategically important as the cross-road for Tibetans, Chinese, Manchus, Mongols and the Salar people, Sino-Turkish Moslems who inhabit the eastern and southern parts of Gansu. Around 1680 the Fifth Dalai Lama sent the lama Ngag-dbang 'phrin-las as his political representative to Kokonor with the task of

alloting territories to the various factions of Mongols who were then in conflict. Xining has always been the centre for Moslems and it is mostly Chinese Moslem settlements which are now engulfing this part of Tibet.

In early times, most of the Tibetan population in Amdo were followers of the Bon religion, the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet before Buddhism penetrated there from China proper, Central Tibet and Dunhuang from the seventh to the ninth centuries A.D. Later there were a few Sa-skya-pa and bKa'-brgyud-pa monasteries before the arrival of the dGe-lugs-pa order which gradually became predominant first in the north and then spread towards the eastern and western parts of the province. A number of regions in the east, south and south-east such as Reb-kong, Co-ne, The-bo, 'Pan-chu, Khod-po, Tol-po, Shar-khog, Tsa-kho, rGyal-rong, and rNga-khog (now Aba), where the sedentary population were subject to fewer Mongol interventions, were less affected by the dGe-lugs-pa and remain faithful to the Bon religion to this day.

**Ethnic and political identity**

Political organizations in Amdo tend towards tribal federations (*tsho*) grouping villages or clusters of tents, in the case of the nomads, in one valley or accoding to a geographical entity. Each federation had its own monastery as the cultural centre, was usually governed by a king or chief, and had its own sacred mountain as divine anscestor, prefacing its name by the term*a myes*, grandfather.

In the regions where the dGe-lugs-pa were predominant, the lay chiefs had less political influence than in those where the population follow the Bon religion. This pattern had a far-reaching influence on the economic and social organization of the people of Amdo. Since the seventeenth century, the whole province was under the Manchu empire, but Manchu rule in Amdo was of course more extensive (especially through the Mongol chiefs) and effective than in Central Tibet. The Manchu government began, as usual, by giving titles and Chinese names to the regional or district chiefs and places but did not change the political organization except in certain regions such as Kokonor. This was very effective in many ways for the sinification of Amdo, particularly in the Kokonor region and its adjacent areas. This process of sinification was carried out by the Chinese Nationalists whose claim over the whole province was, however, more symbolic than effective, but it was later further intensified by the Communists. The constant expansion of the Chinese settlements in Tibetan areas coupled with the low birth rate - both traditional as well as state imposed - among the Tibetans themselves is conveniently paving the way for the sinification of Amdo, which is on the verge of being submerged by the Chinese population, just as happened in Manchuria where there is no longer a distinct Manchu



population with its own ethnic identity. From the time of the Communist take-over of Amdo, the old political divisions have been roughly maintained, but internal administrative reorganization has taken place on a strict basis under the terms of 'Autonomous Prefecture', and 'Autonomous County'. The entire region of mGo-log and other adjacent areas of Kokonor come under the jurisdiction of Xining in Chinghai, the regions of Bla-brang, Co-ne, The-bo, and a part of mDzo-dge are attached to Lanzhou in Gansu; Tsa-kho, rNga-khog, a part of Dzoge, rMe-ba, The-bo, 'Pan-chu, Khod-po, Tol-po, Shar-khog, and the whole rGyal-rong are included in the administration of Chengdu in Sichuan. This age-old method of 'divide and rule' is extremely effective for keeping the whole population disunited: contact between Tibetans at the 'Autonomous Prefecture' level was as difficult as it was rare.

To give but one example, in some autonomous prefectures, schools were authorized to teach Tibetan language, but in others it was not. This was the case in Shar-khog where no schools taught Tibetan and parents were not allowed to send their children to other regions to learn Tibetan writing and reading. I pointed this out to the local Chinese authorities in Songpan and again from Paris. Two years later, in 1987, they replied that a special school had been established in Songpan for the teaching of the Tibetan language. So the Chinese authorities sometimes do pay attention to the complaints.

Since 1720, Amdo has been compeletly detached from the mainstream of political life in Central Tibet although never totally culturally alienated. Consequently it came under the so-called 'Inner Tibet' at the 1914 tripartite convention in Simla between Great Britain, Tibet and China. An armed conflict between the Tibetans and the Chinese Moslems in Amdo in 1925 was completely ingored by the Tibetan government. In the West, it seems that J. F. Rock is the only scholar to provide an account of this particular conflict. Consequently, in 1939 when His Holiness the Dalai Lama was recognized, the Tibetan government could do no more than pay off the ransom demanded by Ma Pu-feng, the local tyrant warlord of Xining. This made the people of Amdo feel that the Tibetan authorities had totally failed in their duty toward the province as reflected in the scornful attitude of the Lhasa nobility and its government towards the people of Amdo.

**Four men of Amdo**

This paradoxical relationship may be illustrated by the activities in this century of four men from Amdo who have been involved in the destiny of Tibet: dGe-bshes Shes-rab rgya-mtsho and his disciple dGe-'dun chos-'phel. Both studied in Bla-brang and later in Drepung. Both were Tibetan nationalists par excellence and both loathed the conservatism of

the Lhasa artistocracy, although it was members of the aristocracy who competed in offering the two masters hospitality, attracted more by the prestige of patronising scholar-monks than by genuine respect. Already, by the late 1930s the two scholar-monks knew that Tibet needed to be modernised if it were to defend itself effectively from what was to come and spoke out accordingly.

dGe-bshes Shes-rab rgya-mtsho was then in a prominent position among the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's entourage, but his relations with the Thirteenth Dalai lama became very strained because of his outspokenness. Later, he was branded as 'pro-Chinese' and in fact left for China where, in the 1950s and 60s, he was president of the Chinese Buddhist Association. In this capacity, he travelled to Burma and Ceylon but during the Cultural Revolution, he was imprisoned for defending the right to use the Tibetan language and died in prison around 1967.

His disciple, dGe-'dun chos-'phel, was branded as Communist and imprisoned in late 1947 by the Tibetan government for having spoken out about the need to reform the age-old system of feudal government. He died in Lhasa in 1952 soon after his release from prison.

While I was in Lhasa in 1991, I wanted to buy a copy of the three volumes of his writings that had been published for the first time in 1990, but I was told that all the copies has been sold out within three days of publication. I felt much encouraged by the continuing popularity of this great author.

The other two men from Amdo are, of course, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the late Panchen Rinpoche. I need not dwell upon their respective accomplishments here as they are already so well known.

### Ancestors and mountains

I have not so far touched upon the ancient beliefs and secular culture among the people of Amdo, because they are not so easily discernible and have hardly ever been recorded either by the Tibetans themselves or by anthropologists. It is Buddhism that has struck the travellers most. However, underneath the surface of Lamaism, which is a relative newcomer, there is an older and unwritten tradition which I believe contributed in fostering our national identity. This is the cult of the ancestral deity who resides in the local mountain. In some areas, the mountain itself is considered a manifestation of the deity as illustrated by the appellation of *a myes*, grandfathers for many of the mountains in Amdo. This belief, which only a few take seriously now, nevertheless presents a secular and cultural tradition that goes back into the myth and mist of history. The ancient Tibetan kings believed that they were descendants of the mountain deity Yar-lha Sham-po in Yarlung. Buddhism has been unable to completely eliminate this belief and indeed has often



tried to assimilate these mountain deities as religious protectors not always with success.

Every year, the people in Amdo perform a ritual on their local mountains. It is an occasion for them to revive their identity, to put their troubles in order, and to relive their own orginal creatión. This ritual is practised especially in the regions where the influence of Buddhism is less discernible and the manner and season in which it is performed may vary from region to region or even village to village, but the ritual is essentially the same. Only the male members of the family and the men within the federation can take part while the women have their own exclusive ritual.

This ritual is one of the cultural elements that has, unlike ordinay lamaistic ceremonies, the effect on reviving the conscious of ethnic identity as a separate people in the face of the forcible sinification.

This article was delivered as a lecture on the occasion of the opening of an exhibition Frontier Tibetans: Peoples of the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands at China Institute, New York, 15 April 1992.

# The Exiled Government and the Bonpo Community in Indian

The origin of the Bon religion is viewed in a variety of different ways by modern academics. The Tibetan historical tradition, however, presents it as a native religion existing in the country long before the introduction of Buddhism in the seventh century, A.D. There is no doubt that when Buddhism arrived in Tibet, it met with some form of this earlier Tibetan faith. In contrast to what happened when Buddhism encountered Shinto in Japan and Taoism in China, in which countries a mutual recognition of the value of the other faith, particularly Shinto in Japan, was rapidly affirmed, Buddhism in Tibet took a different attitude towards the native religion leading to an antagonism which continued throughout the centuries.

At the peak of the Tibetan empire in the eighth century, A.D. Buddhism became the state religion and made a great contribution towards enriching the native culture with Indic conceptions, but at the same it had another effect on the country: the decline of the Tibetan empire due to Buddhist pacifism. The native faith, however, which was primarly associated with the myth of the first Tibetan king, the foundation of the sacred character of the early kings, did not disappear. On the contrary, most of the state ceremonies whether of enthronement or funerals, were carried out in accordance with the native faith. During the reign of Glang Dar-ma, the last Tibetan Emperor, the Buddhist clergy became much too thirsty for political power and the emperor was obliged to take action against the growing power of the Buddhist establishments, but did not persecute Buddhism as a religion as later Buddhist historians allege. In consequence, the empire fell when a Tibetan Buddhist monk ritually murdered the emperor in 842 A.D. Thereafter, Tibet never recovered its former independent status as a unified country. On the contrary, it broke up into petty principalities which gradually paved the way for the coming of theocratic governments under foreign tutelage. The first was that of the Sa-skya-pa at the beginning of the twelfth century which was followed by the periods of Phag-mo gru-pa and the princes of gTsang. During these periods lay governments took power, momentarily reviving and asserting the earlier national independence and the glory of the imperial period. However, this was short lived. Another Lamaistic regime usurped the power once again with the help of a foreign power, the Mongols. This time, it was the dGe-lugs-pa. Not only were they from the start totally dependent on Mongol support for their rule over Central Tibet, but later



they fell victim to Manchu domination, hence that of the Chinese, whom they considered as 'benefactors' and whose emperors they believed to be manifestations of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, the god of learning. A pattern thus established itself: each time a Lamaistic ruler took power he needed foreign support to dominate the Tibetan people. The foreign powers, whether the Mongols or Manchus, were willing to shower presents on the great monasteries in order to establish their political supremacy over Tibet.

The small Buddhist orders, like the rNying-ma-pa or Jo-nang-pa and the Bonpo (the latter were considered *phyi ba,* Outsiders, a term applied to all non-Buddhists) did not have a chance to raise their heads before such a powerful alliance between the dGe-lugs-pa and their foreign overlords.

However, the Fifth Dalai Lama, whose general outlook in religious matters was exceptionally eclectic, hence impartial, had a particularly soft spot for the Bonpo diviners and ritual experts, whom he consulted on a number of occasions when confronted by a problem. He included Bon in his edict as an offcial religion of Tibet, but he was merciless, when the Bonpos in certain regions were at one time suspected of allying with the Karma-pa. The celebrated religious tolerance in Tibet was only true so long as one school did not interfere the political sphere of another dominant one.

From about the tenth century, the Bon religion underwent much change. It began to absorb much of the Buddhist philosophical and doctrinal teachings, such as theories of rebirth and *karma,* just as Buddhism itself had from the earlier Indian religions. At the same time, Buddhism in Tibet fell under the influence of the Bon religion, to the extent that it was no longer possible to make any distinction between the altruistic ideals of both faiths. The difference was that the master whom the Bonpos followed was not Buddha Śākyamuni but gShen-rab Mi-bo. Although Tibetan Buddhists may not like the term Lamaism, it seems appropriate to call it by such a name since it is no longer possible to argue the 'purity' of Tibetan Buddhism as some Tibetan Buddhists and their Western converts like to do. Thu'u-bkvan Chos-kyi nyi-ma, an great eighteenth century dGe-lugs-pa master, noted after completing his celebrated work on Tibetan Buddhist and Bonpo doctrines: "Bon is so mingled with Buddhism and Buddhism with Bon that my analytic eye fails to see the difference between them". Similarly, Professor Snellgrove, a great Buddhologist, observed: "Bon might indeed claim to be the true religion of Tibet. Accepting everything, refusing nothing through the centuries, it is the one all-embracing form of Tibetan religion". Interesting as such intellectual observations are, they do not correspond to the political reality. It was the extremist wing of the dominant power

embodied in monastic conservatism which always had the upper hand, and in the past it was this group which believed in the 'purity' of their teaching and thwarted of progress and modernisation in Tibet. It was this monastic bigotry which placed obstacles in the way when the Thirteenth Dalai Lama foresaw the danger for Tibet's independence and tried to reform Tibet's medieval monastic system of education and the archaic defense set-up.

The main centres of learning for the Bonpo were in central Tibet, particularly in gTsang province, where the hereditary families of special lineage were located. As the local adherents to Bon were small in number, the main source of revenue for the monasteries was the nomadic population in Byang-thang, in the north, where most of the population remained Bonpo. Small pockets of Bonpo could be found in almost every region, for example: Kong-po in Central Tibet, and Derge, Nyag-rong, Khyung-po, Tsha-ba-rong and all the Hor tribes in Eastern Tibet. Larger numbers professed Bon are in boder areas like the western regions of Mount Ti-se in Western Tibet; the Chumbi valley in the south and the rGyal-rong region in the south-east. However, it is in Amdo, the north-eastern part of Tibet where the largest groups are found. The penetration of the dGe-lugs-pa in the province began only in the seventeenth century with the support of the Mongols who had recently settled in the Tibetan areas of Kokonor. As the Mongols were primarily nomadic, the dGe-lugs-pa expansion was very rapid among the nomadic population, but was less successful in the agricultural south and south-eastern parts of Amdo: Shar-khog, rNga-khog, Khod-po, The-bo, Khri-ka and Reb-kong, just to give a few names. All this shows that geographically and demographically the Tibetan population professing the Bon religion was and has remained by no means insignificant, but it is difficult to assess in terms of percentage since no census was ever taken.

Such having been their condition before arriving in India in 1959, the Tibetans of Bonpo denomination, who were in a minority due to the great distance involved for those in the north-eastern Tibet who crossed the Himalayas, did not fit into any of the traditionally recognised Buddhist groups nor could they integrate into the groups coming from a geographical or provincial entity, because they were an assorted group hailing from various regions. Consequently, the difficulty of resettling in India was enormous for them, since most of the aid which came from Western charitable organisations was channelled through the Tibetan refugee administration which completely ignored the Bonpo group. In the end, the Bonpos had to seek aid independently of Dharamsala.

The old Tibetan sectarian attitudes were embarrassingly strong and indeed still persist in spite of the Dalai Lama's efforts. It was only gradually and extremely slowly, to say the least, that the administration in



Dharamsala became conscious of a Tibetan national and cultural identity in which a variety of cultural traditions each has its part to play.

To change this attitude it was necessary for outside pressure to come from the West and for Chinese policies towards Tibet's religious problems to develop.

Western Tibetology has always tended to search for things that are Tibetan, not just simply to study Tibetan translations of Indian Buddhist classics or their Tibetan commentaries. Tibetologists are not content with what Tibet has imported from Buddhist India or China. As mentioned earlier, the 1300-year old Tibetan Buddhist culture is quite young when compared with Tibet's own ancient civilisation. It is therefore natural for scholars to look for other sources of interest. It is in the Bonpo writings that they often find a distinctive indigenous conception - a Tibetan conception, having no Indic origin. Western scholarly interest in such questions was often regarded in Dharamsala as having no importance, and those Tibetans engaged in research along modern lines were looked upon with suspicion, but this attitude fortunately seems to have changed a little with the growing world interest in Tibetan studies in recent years.

In Tibet itself, from the beginning of the 1980s, a very large number of publications of classical and modern writings, well edited and produced, began to appear, including well researched articles on Bon, Buddhism and various non-religious topics by Tibetan research-scholars writing in Tibetan of a high standard. The trend continues in spite of the political demonstrations in Lhasa since September in 1987. The Bonpo Canon containing more than a hundred volumes was published in Chengdu 1986 with the support of the Chinese government. Bonpos in both the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan populated regions enjoy equal rights and benefits with other religious groups as regards the reconstruction of their monasteries and temples. An important monastery in rGyal-rong which was forcibly converted into a dGe-lugs-pa one in the eighteenth century has recently been given back to the Bonpos by the Sichuan authorities.

When the first Tibetan "constitution" was drawn up in Dharamsala on the basis of Buddhist principles in 1963, its article on religion was not explicit concerning non-Buddhist faiths in Tibet. Since then, however, things have improved, but it was only towards the end of the 1970s, that the exiled administration officially recognised Bon as a religion of Tibet on more or less the same footing as the other four Buddhist schools. Thus, in Dharamsala, where there had been so much wringing of hands over the absence of democracy and religious freedom under the Communist regime in Tibet, a representative of the Bonpo community in India was at last reluctantly admitted! A tardy gesture, but better than none, and essential if Tibetan unity is to be maintained at all. Although

the Bonpo community in India is small, it is regarded by the Bonpo population in various regions in Tibet as their representative in the exiled community, a point which the administration seems to have problems taking into account.

The Bonpo community in India has a monastic centre with a good educational system and receives monk-students for training from several regions with a Tibetan speaking Bonpo population of Nepalese or other Himalayan regional nationality.

The Dalai Lama paid a visit to the community in 1990 and spent two days there in conversation with the community leaders. I was told that he enormously enjoyed listening to the philosophical debate of the Bonpo monks. On this occasion, in a long life ceremony, the Dalai Lama accepted to wear the hat of the fully ordained monk of the Bonpo monastic tradition and to hold the sceptre of gShen-rab Mi-bo, the supreme master of the Bon religon. It was a symbolic gesture which revived the eclectic attitude and the link with Bon of his predecessor, the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, to the dismay of the extreme purists among his followers, but to the satisfaction and admiration of the majority of the Tibetans both in the exiled communtiy and in Tibet.



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# Indexes

**Names of places, villages, mountains, rivers, regions, countries, monasteries, castels, temples and heavens**

**Names in Sanskrit**

# ERRATA

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|---|---|---|
| vi | Geniver | Geneva |
| xiii | Kun lbtus | Kun btus |
| 4 | tempel | temple |
| 6 | tatric | tantric |
| 10 | n. 42 pobaby | probably |
| 20 | (at the time, and therefore unable) to make he was translation | (at the time, and therefore he was unable) to make translation… |
| 43 | (Fig. 1) | (Plate 2) |
| 44 | (Fig. 2; Key to Fig. 1) | (Plate 2) |
| 44 | … the bka' shown in | shown in plate 2 |
| 46 | (Fig. 3; see Fig. 2; Key No. 16) | (Plate 3; Key 16) |
| 49 | (Fig. 4; see Fig. 2; Key No. 17) | (Plate 4; Key 17) |
| 52 | (Fig. 2; Key No. 16) | (Plate 2; Key 16) |
| 54 | (Fig. 2; Key No. 17) | (Plate 2; Key 17) |
| 59 | At present | at present |
| 72 | pp. 29--30. | pp. 29-30). |
| 235 | calender | calendar |
| 245 | Queens *rkyang* | Queens (*rkyang …* |
| 249 | 'Six clans of little man' | 'Six clans of little man' *(mi'u gdung drug)* |
| 249 | 'Six delegates of thw World' | 'Six delegates of the World' *(srid pa skos drug)* |
| 261 | ……… | themes but |
| 520 | oficial | official |
| 556 | Métalié | Métallié |
| 560 | Down frm | from |

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